



THE STORIES OF THE YEAR

Eight pages of outstanding writing on the events that moved the world

TOMORROW

24-page sports section
Unrivalled Boxing Day coverage

Labour may cut number of Scots MPs

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

Tony Blair is to order a high-powered internal review of the impact of Scottish devolution on English politics and the right of Scottish Westminster MPs to decide political issues south of the border.

The party is expected to establish a commission in the new year to examine possible answers to the so-called "West Lothian" question, which formed the intellectual basis of the most coherent attack on the devolution proposals of the Callaghan government.

The inquiry's remit will reflect the party leadership's determination to press ahead with plans for a Scottish Parliament, with tax-raising powers, early in the a Labour administration.

But it will seek to establish whether an answer can be found to the question posed repeatedly in the late 1970s by Tam Dalyell, an anti-devolutionist, and then the MP for West Lothian - whether it was justified for Scottish MPs to vote on English and possibly Welsh legislation which no longer applied in Scotland, because it covered issues to be determined by the Scottish Parliament.

The commission is likely to be headed by a high-ranking Scottish Labour figure with UK-wide shadow responsibilities, like

Donald Dewar, the Chief Whip, or Lord Irvine, whom Mr Blair will appoint as Lord Chancellor if he wins the election. It will almost certainly include other senior front-benchers, including George Robertson, the shadow Secretary of State for Scotland and Ann Taylor, the shadow Leader of the Commons.

The Labour leadership is open-minded on the outcome and Mr Blair has made it clear that he has no intention of hacking down on the detailed commitment to a Scottish Parliament, already drawn up with the Liberal Democrats - whatever the conclusions.

But its existence raises the possibility for the first time that the present total of 72 Scottish MPs at Westminster - the large majority of whom are currently Labour - could be reduced to compensate for new powers which will be devolved under Scottish home rule.

So far, even though there are more Labour MPs per head of population in Scotland than in England, Labour has not suggested that the numbers should be reduced. But the Liberal Democrats are already committed to reducing the number of Scottish MPs at Westminster.

John Major is certain to press the arguments raised by the "West Lothian question" in the run up to the general election, as he did in the 1992 campaign,

when he warned that devolution meant that the "future status and number of Scotland's MPs at Westminster would inevitably be diminished".

The Tories are already preparing to question the potential role of Gordon Brown as Chancellor, sitting for a Scottish seat but fixing tax rates for England and Wales. Such tax rates might not be the final levels for Scotland - at least in the theory - because of the Scottish Parliament's right to add or subtract up to 3p in the pound in or from UK tax rates.

The terms of reference of the Labour inquiry are likely to be wide-ranging and could include an examination of whether there is any case for allowing some business for England and Wales to be decided only by English and Welsh MPs. Although Labour is committed to setting up a Welsh assembly, this would have more limited powers than the Scottish Parliament and no right to levy taxes.

The inquiry is less likely to reopen the question of regional government in England as a possible answer to the "West Lothian question". While Mr Blair is committed to a regional elected authority for London, the party has made it clear that it will only agree to regional assemblies elsewhere where there is clear public demand tested in a referendum.

I can't go on, the Pope tells followers

ANDREW GUMBEL
Rome

A weak and feverish Pope John Paul II was forced to interrupt his traditional Christmas greetings to the world yesterday, alarming the 30,000-strong crowd in St Peter's Square as he was seen sighing and bowing his head in the window of his private Vatican apartments.

"I'm sorry, but I can't go on. Merry Christmas and God bless," the 75-year-old Pontiff said hurriedly as he retired inside to his sick. Twenty minutes later he reappeared, to applause from the crowd, but was unable to continue with the greeting he normally reads out in more than 50 languages.

A Vatican spokesman insisted that His Holiness was suffering from no more than a nasty bout of flu, but the episode highlighted the frailty of a man who has undergone major surgery twice in the last three years and lost much of the driving energy that has characterised his 17 years as Pope.

It was the first time since his election in 1978 that John Paul had cut short his heavy Christmas programme of services and addresses. He had appeared to be in fine form until Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, when he gradually turned pale in the heat of St Peter's, filled with around 12,000 worshippers. When he returned to the sacristy, his vestments were bathed in sweat.

By yesterday morning, he was running a temperature and had to bow out of Christmas Mass, which was taken instead by the vicar-general of Vatican City, Cardinal Virgilio Noe. Traditionally, the Pope gives his Urbi et Orbi address, to the city of Rome and the world, from the balcony of St Peter's. Under the circumstances, however, he decided to deliver it from his private apartments.

He had just given his Christmas greeting in Italian and French when he was forced to stop. "Even the Pope has his weaknesses, but I'm trying to resist," he said.

This time last year, the Vatican was abuzz with speculation about the health of the Pope and possible candidates for the succession. Following a painful recovery from hip replacement surgery, he looked pale and weak in public and walked only with the help of a cane.

In 1995 he has remained subdued, but much stronger, allowing Vatican insiders to predict with some confidence that he will fulfil his dream of seeing the Catholic church through the millennium. Reaction in Rome yesterday was noticeably free of panic. "There's been a bug going



Struggling on: The Pope addresses crowds shortly before retiring inside

Photograph: Massimo Sambucetti

More snow on the way

PETER VICTOR

Christmas snowstorms left more than 4,000 families in the Western Isles and Shetland without electricity and facing Boxing Day without heat or light because of hizzard conditions.

Many people enjoyed a less bleak white Christmas after snow fell in Durham, north Yorkshire and parts of Northern Ireland and East Anglia. A London Weather Centre spokesman predicted further snowfalls after Northern Ireland had its first white Christmas in years.

Several people were involved in accidents. In north-west Scotland, lighthouse keeper Donald MacIver cheated death in a hizzard, wading two miles through snowdrifts to find shelter. Mr MacIver, 44, ran into four feet of snow on Christmas Eve when he set out from Cape Wrath light to pick up supplies and mail in a Land Rover. He had to strike out on foot for a hut on a Ministry of Defence firing range. Mr MacIver said last night: "If it weren't for the hut I would be dead."

A Western Isles man and his daughter refused to be rescued

from their van after crashing during a hizzard unless police also took their wild goat.

The cold snap looks set to spread south, with Arctic air covering the whole of the UK. England and Wales will have a mainly dry day with sunny spells although it will be cold. Scotland and Northern Ireland can expect heavy snow at times, especially in the Highlands.

Nine of the ten race meetings scheduled for today have either been abandoned already or face a similar fate this morning.

Blizzards strike: Weather forecast, page 2

Briton's suicide mars Bosnia celebrations

EMMA DALY
Sarajevo

Christmas, which has brought the first hopes for peace to Bosnia, began on a sombre note for British troops in Sarajevo with the news that a comrade had apparently committed suicide on Christmas Eve. But for most it was a joyous event. Thousands packed the Catholic cathedral for Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, where Sarajevo's Cardinal, Vinko Puljic, his voice breaking, told worshippers: "The war is over. Let there be peace."

For the first Christmas in four years, the city resounded to music and laughter rather than the sounds of war. "It's the first time

since the war began that there is no shooting at Christmas," said Edi Hrnjic, a young Muslim, said as he joined on the Cathedral steps with a friend. "I'm hoping it's the first Christmas in peace-time," Elvina Dzafic, a Muslim woman, said. "It's much better than last year, because it's calm, there is no shooting, and we have everything we need on the table."

Proof of the changes came as we walked across Vrbanka bridge, probably the single most dangerous place in the city, to visit French troops celebrating Mass.

It was here that Suada Dilberovic, a student attending a peace demonstration on 5 April 1992, was killed by a sniper - the

first victim of the war in Sarajevo.

The latest to die was Signalmann Mark Maxwell, 22, of 7 Signal Regiment, apparently by his own hand. He was found in his room at a Nato base in the city with a gunshot wound in the head. "It appears there was no one else involved," Colonel Mark Rayner, spokesman for Nato's Implementation Force (I-Fnr), told reporters.

Maxwell's commanding officer, Major Julian Turner, said his death had come as a great shock to his comrades. "He was always a happy lad, he made other people smile. That's why his death was so unexpected."

"I don't know why - he was quite a pal," Signalmann Glen

MacDonald said as he queued for lunch at the battered Nato base in Zetra Olympic stadium after a Christmas service. The cooks, draped in streamers and red caps, did their best to keep it festive, doling out turkey and demanding kisses from the few women in the area.

The officers, as tradition dictates, awoke the men yesterday morning with cups of tea laced with rum, and helped to serve lunch, accompanied by Spanish champagne. Brigadier Tony Rapier, who has troops dotted around Sarajevo - including 19 unfortunates stuck on top of Mount Bjelasnica, the Olympic ski mountain where the temperature was minus 36C - was doing the rounds yesterday. "I

go and chat to the men, dish them out some booze, make sure they're happy," he said.

The Americans were also celebrating, with iced tea and lemonade: the US Army, unlike its Nato allies, is dry on operations. "I hope the peace stays," said Warrant Officer Terry Speak, who had delivered Christmas lunches to the Bjelasnica troops, though they had to walk down the mountain to collect it. "It was quite strange driving through Sarajevo last night seeing so many people walking around, holding hands, hars and cafes full."

The 10pm curfew was lifted for the holidays, and the streets were jammed on Christmas Eve with Sarajevoans celebrating.

Thousands, many of them Muslims or Serbs - the latter also celebrate Orthodox Christmas next month - turned out for Midnight Mass at the Catholic cathedral, a lively social event uniting the city and its longing for a return to real life. "I have good news for you today. A child is born to us: peace," the Cardinal said in a sermon that provoked lengthy applause from the congregation. "Hope comes with this Christmas."

Three women gathered outside for a cigarette after the service agreed. "Hope is the most important thing," said Jovanka Vlic, a Serb married to a Croat. "I would rather go without water during the day or bread if only we could have peace."

IN BRIEF

Message of peace

The Queen concentrated on peace moves around the world rather than the warring factions within her own family in her Christmas message. Page 3

Nursery plans

Labour is to rewrite the curriculum for under-5s. Page 4

Hope for sale

Big stores are expecting shoppers to spend more in this year's winter sales. Page 3
Sales guide, page 15



Stamps stuck with off-shore discount

CHRIS BLACKHURST

Royal Mail stamps are being sold at a cheap rate by a company based in the Isle of Man, while retailers and sub-post offices on the mainland are forced to sell them at full price. The company is exploiting a little-known practice where the Post Office sells stamps to dealers at a discount.

Dealers buy the stamps ostensibly for other dealers and collectors and then sell them

to the firm in the Isle of Man. Warwick Estates in Douglas, Isle of Man, has completed the peak Christmas period, selling 25p first-class and 19p second-class British Christmas stamps at 10 per cent off their face price. A mailshot from the company, sent to would-be customers on the mainland, boasts: "We now have the British 19p Christmas stamps in stock at our regular 10 per cent discount below face. The 19p is the most popular value for cards."

The company gives sample savings: 45p on 50 stamps; £3.80 on 300; £9.50 on 500; and £19 on 1,000. Stamps for packages are available. Warwick guarantees: "All our stamps are in good condition with gum and normally supplied in full sheets. We obtain them from overstocked stamp dealers around the world, fire salvage, liquidations etc. They are perfectly valid and legal for use."

Graham Warwick of Warwick Estates refused to say how

many British stamps he had sold this Christmas, except it was "thousands". He emphasised, though, that he did not sell cheap Royal Mail stamps just at Christmas.



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news

The poor of Paris flock to 'supermarket' giveaway

In Britain we tend not to think of the French as particularly charitable, but in case you need convincing that the British do not have a monopoly on good works, consider this: French television's *Téléthon*—an almost exact counterpart of the BBC's *Children in Need*—raised a record 377 million francs (£49.6m) this year, more than four times the BBC's £11.9m. This was achieved when all France was at a standstill because of the strikes, in a country where the national, and many other, lotteries are institutions of long standing.

Charity ventures organised in

Mary Dejevsky discovers the festive season brings out the generosity in the French

Paris this Christmas—and for many Christmases past—range from bazaars set up by parishes, clubs and other organisations, including the French Navy to help fund its charitable work, to premises temporarily converted into giant hostels to house the Paris counterparts of Crisis, the UK charity for the homeless.

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, Secours Populaire—originally, but no longer,

linked with the Communist Party—decided that instead of distributing food parcels to those on its register, it would set up a three-day "supermarket" where people could choose, within limits, what they wanted. Each "chequebook" contained 15 coupons, each for a different group of goods: groceries, soft drinks, sweets, dairy products, fruit, meat (including one turkey per family); small presents, even Christmas trees.

The Bercy palace of sport in a benighted redevelopment area of east central Paris is not the first place that springs to mind as a repository of the festive spirit. But in the days before Christmas it rang with excited voices as a seemingly endless stream of people—young mothers with small children, adolescents, and wizened elderly women—made their way around the concrete "palace" and across a muddy building-site

to join a teeming queue waiting in front of a half-renovated warehouse.

Everyone carried large empty bags or pulled little shopping carts and, when courteously stopped at "checkpoints" along the way, waved their books of coupons—or offered complicated hardluck stories in which the words "local council", "postal strikes" and "it must be a mistake" figured large.

They were all benefiting—or hoping to benefit—from *Supermarché libre*—mounted by Secours Populaire to supply poor families in the Paris region with Christmas provisions.

Many arrived by coach; gathering obediently in labelled groups before joining the hundreds-strong queue. Others came on the now working— and temporarily free—metro and suburban railway.

The project was greeted with enthusiasm. "It was an hour's journey in the coach, but it's brilliant," said Martine who had two small children in tow. "You can choose, without worrying what it costs." She had two large bags, completely full, including the turkey and a pack of giant leeks sticking out of the top. Her only disappointment was the dearth of toys. There were

books, but she thought they looked too like textbooks.

Some people tried with varying degrees of guile (and success) to swap their grocery "cheque" for sweets—something the system was devised to prevent. Others were frustrated with the queuing; some complained about people with "photocopied" cheques. Some of the helpers worried at having to make so many snap decisions about who to let in and who not. But in the course of three days more than 16,000 people cashed their "cheques" worth more than 400 francs per book, and went home happy.

Sacked prisons chief lambasts Howard

The sacked prisons chief Derek Lewis yesterday issued a strongly worded warning to the Government about the dangers of making prison life too harsh.

Mr Lewis spoke out as he prepared to publish a book in the New Year which threatens to "lift the lid" on the Government's beleaguered prison policy, sparking fresh embarrassment for the Home Secretary, Michael Howard.

In an outspoken attack on jail policy—just days after prison inspectors walked out of Holloway women's jail over harsh conditions there—Mr Lewis expressed his concern that politicians were overly concerned with excessively tough prison regimes.

Prisons should be austere and there should not be any hint of luxury, Mr Lewis said.

"But what worries me at present is that the political debate—public attention being focused on prisons, the emphasis being given to austerity and security—will upset the balance which is so important."

"Prisons are not serving the public well if they simply turn out embittered, alienated prisoners who were going to go straight back to a life of crime."

"There is a very important rehabilitative task to be done."

He argued that too many offenders "at the margins" were already being sent to prison.

Mr Lewis—who was sacked as director-general in October—also accused Mr Howard of "too much political involvement" in the Prison Service's day-to-day running. He said there was a "very substantial difference of view" between them about what their relationship should be.

Mr Lewis made his criticism just 24 hours after the former Parkhurst Prison governor, John Marriott, branded Mr Howard a "small-minded man" who "mistakes public rhetoric for strong leadership".

Cold turkey as blizzards strike



Snow place like home: A house near Banchory, on Royal Deeside, transformed into an igloo by the ravages of the Christmas Day weather

Photograph: Derek Irlsides

PETER VICTOR

White Christmas: Thousands suffering seasonal snow chaos

More than 4,000 families in the Western Isles and Shetland suffered Christmas Day without electricity and face Boxing Day without heat or light because of blizzard conditions.

The weather was so bad that Shetland Islands Council ordered snow plough drivers to stay at home for their own safety.

Hundreds of engineers battled against atrocious conditions to restore power in the Highlands and Islands and north-east of Scotland. But many families ate a cold Christmas meal amid

some of the worst weather in living memory.

Mike Keohane, a spokesman for the power-generating company Hydro Electric, said last night: "Despite the valiant efforts today of our repair teams in Shetland and the Western Isles we are talking about potentially another 24 hours without any electricity."

"It's just horrendous. Our response is clearly that this has been an act of God—a storm which produced winds in excess

of 100mph has done very significant damage."

"Clearly what has happened is very regrettable and it is terrible on Christmas Day but power cuts certainly occur two or three times a year."

Hydro Electric covers one quarter of the land mass of Great Britain but only 2 per cent of the population. Many of its customers are supplied with electricity along single cables going up remote glens with small dwellings.

"It just takes one of these lines to go out," Mr Keohane said. "I think those who live in remote locations themselves know that you have to accept the risk at this time of the year. It's not like living in a city where you can draw electricity from four directions."

The blizzard left Shetland's 22,000 residents with a white-out Christmas. All roads outside the county town of Lerwick were blocked, the town and its population of 8,000 were cut off

by drifts more than 30ft high. Thousands more homes were snowed in.

More than 20 airline passengers were stranded in a hotel near Sumburgh Airport.

The council convenor Lewis Smith said: "The snow ploughs can't cope. Heavy snow in Shetland is highly unusual and the only snow blowers are at the main airport." Clearing the 500 miles of blocked roads could take several days, he added.

AA Roadwatch said the se-

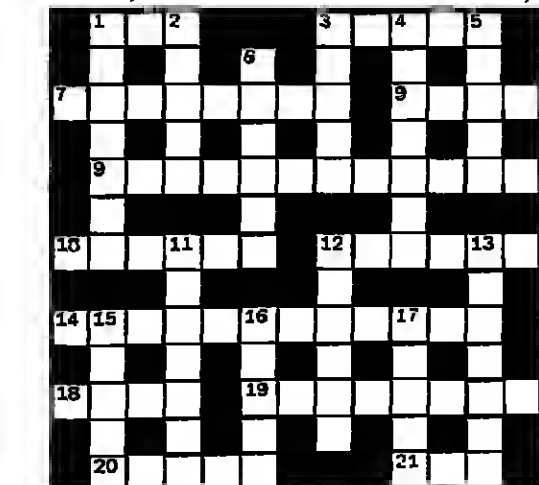
vere weather made driving conditions hazardous in much of Scotland and northern England and more snow was threatened.

"Our Christmas message is that if you don't need to travel—then don't."

Goat owner Anne Louise Macdonald, who crashed her van in the Western Isles blizzard, refused to be rescued unless police also took care of the wild goat. PC John Hie, who rescued Miss Macdonald and her father, Jimmy, said: "We told them the goat would be all right in their van until later. But the gentleman and the lady weren't having any of it."

concise crossword

No. 2886 Tuesday 26 December By Aled



- ACROSS**
- For one (3)
 - Poetry (5)
 - Emits heat (8)
 - Not working (4)
 - Safety devices for jet pilots (7,5)
 - Pattern of small pieces (6)
 - Whole (6)
 - Handicap (12)
 - Card game (4)
 - Cut (8)
 - Give up (5)
 - 24 hours (3)
- DOWN**
- Useless medicine (7)
 - Lift up (5)
 - Face shield (5)
 - Minaret (anag) (7)
 - Noisy display (5)
 - Unmoving (6)
 - Mollusc (7)
 - Girl nice in the end? (6)
 - A coming back in (2-5)
 - Mild sarcasm (5)
 - With force of law (5)
 - Blitter (5)

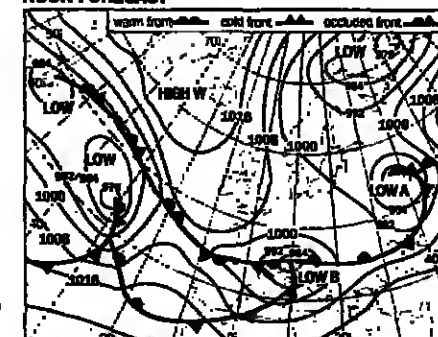
Solution to Saturday's Concise Crossword:

Across: 1 Lick, 4 Cures (Liqueurs), 9 Cream, 10 Leonine, 11 Untaught, 12 Alkin, 13 Fruit machines, 17 Maul, 18 Ploimaine, 21 Glanced, 22 Obese, 23 Ebony, 24 Kilt.

Down: 2 Inept, 3 Kumquat, 4 Coldheartedly, 5 Riot, 6 Slick-on, 7 Scruff, 8 Vein, 14 Ullulate, 15 Hammock, 16 Skewer, 17 Magi, 19 Ideal, 20 Echo.

weather

NOON FORECAST



Low 8 and 9 are moving rapidly north-westwards, while Low 10 is approaching Scotland. W to S in the morning.

WORLD WEATHER (continued from page 1)

City	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
London	12/10	10/15	Partly	None
Birmingham	11/9	10/14	Partly	None
Manchester	10/8	10/13	Partly	None
Newcastle	9/7	10/12	Partly	None
Glasgow	8/6	10/11	Partly	None
Edinburgh	7/5	10/10	Partly	None
Cardiff	11/9	10/14	Partly	None
Belfast	10/8	10/13	Partly	None
Paris	12/10	10/15	Partly	None
Brussels	11/9	10/14	Partly	None
Amsterdam	10/8	10/13	Partly	None
Copenhagen	9/7	10/12	Partly	None
Stockholm	8/6	10/11	Partly	None
Helsinki	7/5	10/10	Partly	None
Tallinn	6/4	10/9	Partly	None
Riga	5/3	10/8	Partly	None
Moscow	4/2	10/7	Partly	None
Warsaw	3/1	10/6	Partly	None
Berlin	2/0	10/5	Partly	None
Frankfurt	1/1	10/4	Partly	None
Munich	0/0	10/3	Partly	None
Zurich	-1/1	10/2	Partly	None
Vienna	-2/2	10/1	Partly	None
Budapest	-3/3	10/0	Partly	None
Prague	-4/4	9/11	Partly	None
Bratislava	-5/5	9/10	Partly	None
Warsaw	-6/6	9/9	Partly	None
Cracow	-7/7	9/8	Partly	None
Wroclaw	-8/8	9/7	Partly	None
Poland	-9/9	9/6	Partly	None
Czech	-10/10	9/5	Partly	None
Slovak	-11/11	9/4	Partly	None
Hungary	-12/12	9/3	Partly	None
Romania	-13/13	9/2	Partly	None
Bulgaria	-14/14	9/1	Partly	None
Greece	-15/15	9/0	Partly	None
Turkey	-16/16	8/11	Partly	None
Iran	-17/17	8/10	Partly	None
Pakistan	-18/18	8/9	Partly	None
India	-19/19	8/8	Partly	None
China	-20/20	8/7	Partly	None
Japan	-21/21	8/6	Partly	None
Korea	-22/22	8/5	Partly	None
Thailand	-23/23	8/4	Partly	None
Malaysia	-24/24	8/3	Partly	None
Singapore	-25/25	8/2	Partly	None
Philippines	-26/26	8/1	Partly	None
Indonesia	-27/27	8/0	Partly	None
Maldives	-28/28	7/11	Partly	None
Sri Lanka	-29/29	7/10	Partly	None
Myanmar	-30/30	7/9	Partly	None
Burma	-31/31	7/8	Partly	None
Laos	-32/32	7/7	Partly	None
Cambodia	-33/33	7/6	Partly	None
Thailand	-34/34	7/5	Partly	None
Laos	-35/35	7/4	Partly	None
Myanmar	-36/36	7/3	Partly	None
Burma	-37/37	7/2	Partly	None
Laos	-38/38	7/1	Partly	None
Thailand	-39/39	7/0	Partly	None
Laos	-40/40	6/11	Partly	None
Myanmar	-41/41	6/10	Partly	None
Burma	-42/42	6/9	Partly	None
Laos	-43/43	6/8	Partly	None
Thailand	-44/44	6/7	Partly	None
Laos	-45/45	6/6	Partly	None
Myanmar	-46/46	6/5	Partly	None
Burma	-47/47	6/4	Partly	None
Laos	-48/48	6/3	Partly	None
Thailand	-49/49	6/2	Partly	None
Laos	-50/50	6/1	Partly	None

Source: The Met Office

Tories plan for more secure PM

DONALD MACINTYRE

Senior Tory backbenchers will next month begin a wide-ranging review of the rules for party leadership contests which could make it harder for MPs to dislodge prime ministers from office.

Sir Marcus Fox, chairman of the 1922 Committee, will in the New Year propose that leading officers begin in earnest to examine options for change to the rules under which an incumbent leader can be replaced.

Sir Marcus has already consulted his predecessor Cranley Onslow about the options covered during the last review, which followed Lady Thatcher's departure in 1990. That resulted in the present requirement that a contest can only be held if 10 per cent of the parliamentary party signify in writing that they want such a contest.

One member of the 1922 executive said that "nothing will be barred" in an examination of the present leadership rules, and that the officers will not be

flushed into making early recommendations.

These could include removing the right to challenge a sitting prime minister for the leadership at all, if he is of sound mind, or raising the proportion of MPs required to demand a contest.

Some senior Tories argue, however, that the increasing threat of leadership challenges adds to turmoil within the party and unnecessarily destabilises the party at the expense of its electoral interests.

Police fear lorry driver abducted French student

Detectives seeking a missing French student believe she was probably abducted by a lorry driver who gave her a lift.

Despite widespread appeals, the driver, who picked up Celine Figard, 19, at a service area near Newbury, Berkshire, has not come forward.

Detective Superintendent Des Thomas said yesterday: "If he is an innocent man why has he not come forward? Either he has not heard about the appeal or you can draw your sinister implications. Someone out there knows who he is. The quicker they tell us the quicker we can get to her."

"Thousands of posters showing a picture of Celine, asking 'Have you seen this girl?' and stating 'The police fear for her safety' are to be distributed within the next few days."

Celine was given a lift from the Chieveley service area at the junction of the M4 and A34 near Newbury last Tuesday.

The poster describes the white Mercedes car she got into as pulling a grey trailer with a Thermo King refrigeration unit. The driver was white, 30 to 35, with short fair hair and a chin strap beard but no moustache.



Poster campaign: Left, the video of the driver compiled by a witness who saw him with Celine, right



He was wearing a grey top. The poster shows a video of the driver, compiled by a witness who saw Celine with him.

Celine, of Sey-Sur-Saone, France, had come to Britain to spend Christmas with a cousin who works at a hotel in Fordingbridge, Hampshire.

He was wearing a grey top. The poster shows a video of the driver, compiled by a witness who saw Celine with him.

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The Queen's speech: Warring family factions take a back seat to the courage of peace workers all over the world

A royal message of peace and goodwill

JOHN MCKIE

The Queen yesterday concentrated on the bright side of life in her annual message to the Commonwealth. She did not mention the warring factions within her own household, but dwelt instead on the peace initiatives around the world and narrated footage of the royal family on its best behaviour and at its most effective.

In the broadcast from Sandringham, Norfolk, her sombre delivery contrasted with scenes of the royal family in happier mood at this summer's VE and VJ Day 50th anniversary celebrations, and her own successful tour of South Africa in March.

The starring roles were taken by the older members of the family, with glimpses of Prince Charles and his estranged wife, Princess Diana, was far from the royal festivities in Norfolk, playing an uncharacteristically low-profile role.

The Queen, in her speech, spoke of the successful brokering of peace in Northern Ireland and Bosnia, and paid tribute to various Commonwealth volunteer organisations. In particular, she mentioned an Irish nurse whom she met in South Africa, Sister Ethel Normoyle, who teaches underprivileged children in a township just outside Port Elizabeth.

"The traditional Christmas message speaks of peace and goodwill among men," the Queen said. "It is the volunteers and the Sister Ethels of this world who spread that message and it is for the rest of us to welcome it."

She gave special emphasis to the VE and VJ Day festivities in May and August. "It was difficult to know that day who felt the greater pride," she said, "those of us watching or those of us on parade. It was an unforgettable day for all of us."

There was praise also for the volunteer workers in countries "from Bosnia to Rwanda, from Chechnya to Cambodia", whom the Queen recently visited in Buckingham Palace.

"Like the people who fought and won the last war, they

make no claim to be anything out of the ordinary, but their commitment is very far from ordinary," she said.

The royal family, without the Princess of Wales or the Duchess of York - gathered for the traditional church service at Sandringham, Norfolk, yesterday. It was the first time the Princess of Wales had missed the event.

Royal family members who attended the 45-minute service included the Queen Mother, the Duke of Edinburgh, Princes Charles, Edward, William and Harry, Princess Margaret, and the Princess Royal, accompanied by her husband Captain Tim Laurence and her children Peter and Zara Phillips. The family spent the rest of the day at Sandringham.

Buckingham Palace had halved the usual quota of photographers and journalists given access to cover the Sandringham service to only 20. This decision was thought to be an attempt to recover some of the mystique the royal family has lost over the past two decades.

A palace spokesman said that the Queen's decision not to mention her family was not unusual. "She has been doing the speech for 40 years," he said. "It's a Commonwealth message, and if she chooses to adopt a bigger theme, then that's a matter for her."

In his Christmas address yesterday, the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, did mention the schisms within the royal family. He said that the Prince and Princess of Wales and their children "have been at the forefront of our prayers as we sense afresh some of the pain they carry".

Princess Diana had left journalists none the wiser as to her whereabouts. Some felt she might have been at her brother's home of Althorp, in Northamptonshire, while other reporters thought she was heading for a skiing trip in Colorado.

The Duchess of York, although not present at the church, later dined with her daughters Beatrice and Eugenie at the Wood Farm House on the Sandringham estate.



Standing together: The royal family gathers outside the church at Sandringham after the traditional Christmas service Photograph: John Stillwell / PA

Good news is the focus in even the worst years

JOHN MCKIE

Christmas may have changed since her accession, and the situation in her household has shifted dramatically in the last week alone, but the Queen chose not to break with tradition in her message to the Commonwealth yesterday.

Choosing to avoid any reference to the expected divorce of her eldest son and his wife, the Queen focused on traditional themes - international strife and hardship and, of course, the good news.

Good news has been a comforting factor in her Christmas address to the nation in the last few years of her troubled reign. In 1992, the year she had called her "annus horribilis" in a speech just before Christmas, the collapse of the marriages of her two eldest sons was heavily publicised and Windsor Castle was badly damaged by fire.

But in that year's Christmas message she did not refer specifically to such problems. Instead, she paid tribute to Lord Cheshire VC, the founder of Cheshire Homes for the disabled. She acknowledged the difficult days the family had faced but stressed the continuity of her reign. "To me, this continuity is a great source of comfort in a world of change, tension and violence," she said.

Last year she also tried to extract good news from a bad year, reciting a 1919 poem from Siegfried Sassoon, "Everybody Sang". She quoted: "Everybody suddenly burst out singing. And I was filled with such delight."

The theme of good news keeps recurring. Ten years ago it cropped up "in spite of the frightening headlines". "It used to be said," she recalled, "that 'no news is good news', but today you might well think that, 'good news is no news'."

In 1975, there was a similar message of optimism: "If enough grains of sand are dropped into one side of a pair of scales they will, in the end, tip against a lump of lead."

In previous decades, the Queen was more inclined to talk about her family than she is now. She praised "the great family festival" of Christmas in her 1965 address, but her first speech in 1952 was much more personal. "Each Christmas, at this time, my beloved father broadcast a message to his people in all parts of the world. Today I am doing this to you who are my people. As he used to do."

The following year the Queen was revealed as a proud parent, a quality she has seldom shown recently. "We all want our children at Christmas time. I hope that perhaps mine are listening to me now, and I am sure that when the time comes they, too, will be great travellers."



Sister Ethel Normoyle won praise in the Queen's message

'Don't compare me to Teresa'

The missionary nun singled out by the Queen in her Christmas speech told the world yesterday: "Don't compare me to Mother Teresa."

The modest Sister Ethel Normoyle, who has dedicated herself for the last seven years to helping the poor in a shanty town in South Africa, said she was "delighted" to be mentioned in the monarch's Christmas message.

But she said: "I don't think I would want any symbolism to Mother Teresa. We have just both shared in the theme of the poverty of people. We are just trying to do what everybody here is doing - to reach out to people who are broken and repressed. I'm just trying to do my bit to bring the compassion of Christ to people."

"The more you are involved in their lives, you become very aware of the poverty and suffering."

The modest 50-year-old nun, from Liscasey, County Clare, in the west of the Irish Republic, met the Queen when she visited South Africa in March.

The Queen used the historic occasion to see the work of the Little Company of Mary, in Missionvale, near Port Elizabeth, where Sister Ethel and her colleagues give hope and support to thousands of people living in horrendous poverty.

Sister Ethel described her feelings on the sunny day the Queen and her entourage called at Missionvale's school and clinic, built from humble beginnings seven years ago, and then looking its very best.

"She was really wonderful, interested and caring," Sister Ethel also praised the Princess of Wales's campaigning for disadvantaged groups in Britain.

"I have great admiration for her - she's really caring and has great compassion."

Helping porpoises slip through the net

In the second in a weekly series, Nicholas Schoon reports on dangers faced by the dolphin's smaller cousin

The harbour porpoise is the smallest and by far the most common of the whales and dolphins living in the waters around Britain. But its population is thought to be in decline and it is now very rare in the English Channel or the southern sector of the North Sea.

It is one of Britain's most threatened or fastest declining species and habitats, for which rescue plans have been proposed by a steering group of government scientists and wildlife conservation groups.

The best-documented threat it faces is from bottom-set drift nets, which are like curtains, several miles across, running along the sea-bed. The porpoises become entangled in these nets and drown; surveys have suggested about 10,000 die this way each year, mostly in the North Sea, off the coast of Denmark, and the Celtic Shelf waters off south-west England and southern Ireland.

But scientists believe the porpoise, *phocoena phocoena*, is also vulnerable to long-lasting, toxic pollutants which

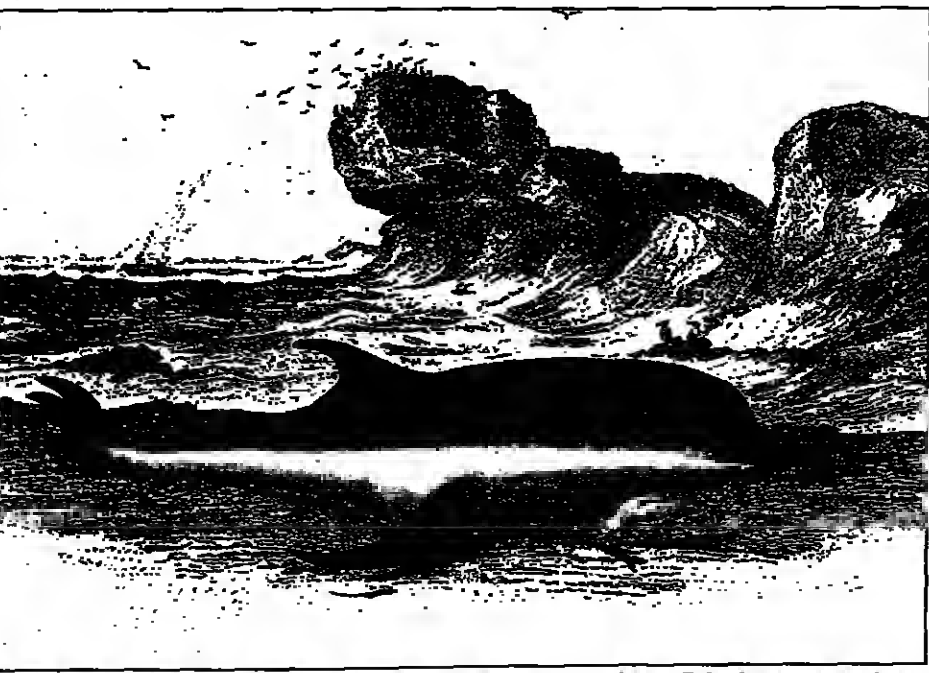


Heritage of the Wild

flow down rivers into the sea, get into the small fish it preys upon and then accumulate in the porpoise's body fat. It may also be frightened away from busy areas by the noise and movements of ships and boats.

The males grow up to 1.7m long. The females are sexually mature at only 14-months-old and they give birth to single calves. They are shy and secretive, compared to dolphins, which are often bold, curious and playful with people and ships. Consequently, little is known about the porpoise's social and family life. It surfaces only briefly to breathe. Earlier this year it emerged that dolphins sometimes kill their smaller relatives in British waters, ramming and battering them.

In 1994, Britain's Sea Mammal Research Unit in Cam-



Endangered: Action is needed to safeguard the grey porpoise in British coastal waters

bridge organised a large survey of cetaceans in the North Sea, the English Channel and Celtic Shelf, using ships and aircraft. This led to the first population estimate for the porpoise - between 267,000

and 465,000 dwell in these seas. The Steering Group proposes a target of maintaining this population and ensuring in the long term that no man-made factors stop the porpoise returning to waters where it was formerly found.

Among the recommendations for achieving this are further river and coastal pollution curbs, and changes in fishing practices and net design to reduce the drownings. The cost is estimated at £250,000 a year.

Hunger drives rare birds ashore providing treats for twitchers

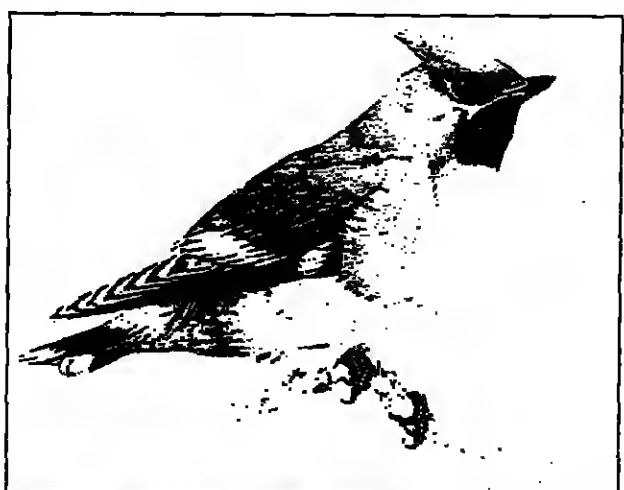
Bird watchers have had a Christmas bonus this year with a flurry of sightings of the rare Arctic redpoll - a small grey-and-white finch.

There has also been an arrival of waxwings, pinkish-brown starling-like birds with prominent head crests and red, yellow and white wing markings, from the northern forests of Scandinavia and Russia.

One of the best areas for spotting is north Norfolk, where there have been up to five Arctic redpolls in fields between Cromer and East Runton, while a flock of 14 waxwings has been seen near Sheringham.

Arctic redpolls have also been identified at the William Thorne Nature Reserve near Baslow, Derbyshire; at Brentwood, Essex; in a wood near Rutland Water, Leicestershire; near Newborough, Staffordshire; and at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds reserve at Vanc Farm near Kinross, Tayside.

More than 120 birds have been reported around Britain since the record invasion began last month, with some of the largest numbers appearing in Orkney and Shetland. The severe weather in the



Waxwing: Suffering food shortages in northern forests

Northern Isles should not bother them as they are among the world's hardiest birds, known to survive temperatures as low as -60C in Alaska. Their flight to Britain is not considered weather-related but is caused by a food shortage in their annual wintering territories - which is also the reason for the sudden appearance of the waxwings. Waxwings, which feed on berries, have been reported at

Fazakerley, Merseyside; Holkham, Norfolk; and near Barnsley and Doncaster in South Yorkshire. More are likely to be reported further afield over the next few days. Other sightings over Christmas have included snow, a duck from Scandinavia or Russia, which has been reported in Berkshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Cornwall, Essex, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire.

Sales set to bring a happy New Year to stores

GLENDIA COOPER

Big stores are expecting restored consumer confidence in make this season's sales a success for both customer and retailer following last year's "disappointing" spending.

Mortgage and interest-rate cuts have played their part, coupled with the larger stores slashing prices by half on many items.

"Overall we're expecting people to take advantage of the sales," said a spokeswoman for the British Retail Consortium. "We're expecting them to be better than last year." She added that January 1995 was a "disappointment", with retail sales dropping to £10.75bn from £20.7bn last December.

This year is likely to be better, with a more robust consumer confidence. "We've also got the prospect of more money in our pockets in April and possibly another interest-rate cut in the New Year. This should make people a little more comfortable about spending," the spokeswoman said.

Richard Perks, retail analyst with the market research organisation Verdict, said: "The sales should be good, partly because of poor overall retail sales this year." He expects retailers to be cautious, and to knock down "a lot" of prices on their stock.

Paul Keenan, PR manager of the MetroCentre in Gateshead, Europe's largest shopping centre agreed: "There will be a lot of bargains and we think purchasing will be very good." Last year the centre saw 142,000 shoppers through its doors on the first day of the sales.

Post-Christmas sales in the larger stores can create a formidable turnover. Selfridges, a major retailer on London's Oxford Street, says that the winter sale accounts for 15 per cent of its annual turnover. The first week of the sale is also Selfridges' busiest week of the year with 85,000 people expected through the door tomorrow.

Marks & Spencer would not reveal details of their sale in advance. But a spokeswoman said: "The sale is a way of clearing merchandise, clearing winter stock out so that we can start introducing the Spring ranges."

Liberty's of Regent Street store expects to see at least 50,000 bargain-hunters on the first day of the sale, and is offering half price on designer names such as Vivienne Westwood and Liza Bruce.

The frozen food giant Iceland will join the fray this week by firing an early shot across the bows of competitors in the New Year supermarket price war. The high-street chain is turning the clock back a decade by cutting prices to 1986 levels on hundreds of items for two weeks from 30 December. "Everyone wants bargains in the New Year and other retailers may have to follow our move," said Iceland chairman Malcolm Walker.

Most of the big stores, including Selfridges and Liberty, begin their sales at 9am tomorrow. But for those who believe there is only one sale, Harelds will not be starting until 3 January.

Sales Guide, page 15

Labour to rewrite nurseries curriculum

Early learning: Policy to embrace partnership of public and private sector for under-fives

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Labour will offer state money to private nurseries and rewrite the curriculum for the under-fives in plans to be announced next month.

The party is already looking at projects which might form the model for its aims to expand nursery education and day care. One involves a private company, set up by a Labour council, which has taken over all day nurseries in a Tory borough.

In a paper to be launched in the New Year, the party will condemn the Government's nursery plans, despite recent reports that the party might not withdraw the £1.1m vouchers if it came to power after their introduction. It is likely to promise nursery education for all three- and four-year-olds, as well as day care for babies and toddlers.

Though Labour has not costed its plans, experts have estimated that between £1.0bn and £1.04bn per year might be needed to provide part-time nursery education for three

year-olds and full-time schooling for four year-olds. A fully integrated under-fives service, including day care, would cost around £2.7bn per year.

Margaret Hodge, head of the party's "early years" inquiry and MP for Barking, said Labour had to recognise that things had changed since Margaret Thatcher first promised nursery education for all in 1972. Part-time care would no longer suffice because far more mothers now worked, she said.

"We will have to build on the legacy we inherit, and so we would have to look for partnerships with the private and voluntary sector to create these places for children. We have got to be imaginative if we are to provide access to all," she said.

The party's new policy foresees an integrated under-fives service, often run by partnerships of private, public and voluntary organisations. Local authorities would still be responsible for planning and inspection.

Nurseries might be built by private companies, such as supermarkets, in return for

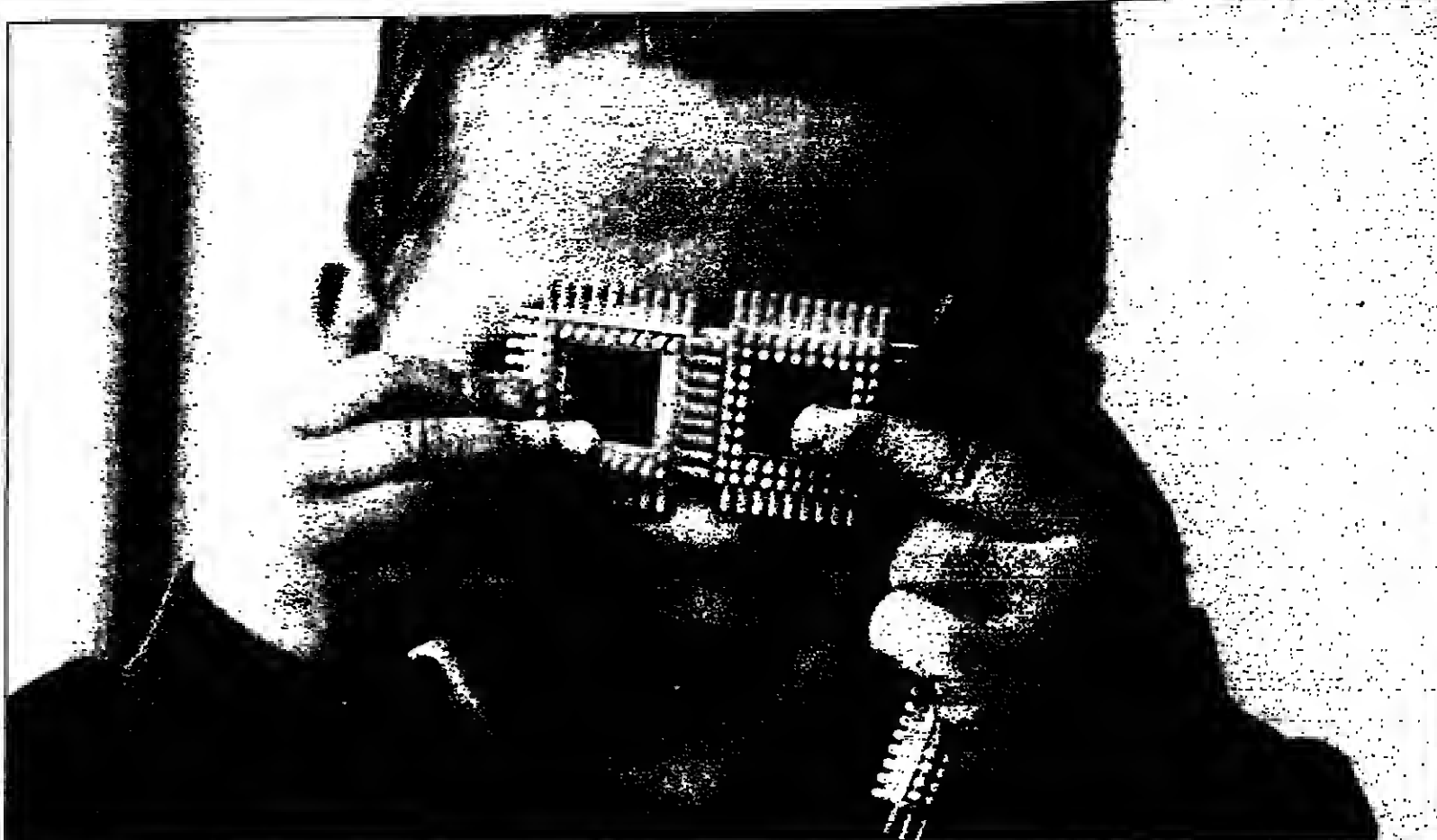
planning permission for developments, and could be run by a local authority or by a voluntary organisation. Mrs Hodge said there should be flexibility so that authorities in different areas of the country could meet local needs in their own ways.

Labour would also scrap plans drawn up by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) for a nursery curriculum which sets down basic targets for levels of numeracy, literacy and general knowledge.

Instead, it is examining a project set up by all major groups representing nursery and childcare organisations to design a new curriculum from birth to the age of eight.

The Early Childhood Education Forum is just finishing a first draft of its plan, *Quality and Diversity*. Its authors say the SCAA curriculum is too rigid and could even be damaging.

Instead, they propose five "foundations", based on active learning, pupil participation and imagination as well as on building a sense of individuality and of group membership.



Child's view: A young member of Barne Hill nursery, in Brent, north London, run for the council by Childcare Enterprise. Photograph: Philip Meech

Council finds childcare makes commercial sense

A socialist council which has gone into business in an attempt to improve its nurseries could provide a model for Labour's future plans. North Tyneside has set up a private company which has even taken over all the nurseries in the Tory London Borough of Brent, writes Fran Abrams.

Five years ago North Tyneside had 95 nursery places for children from deprived backgrounds. Now it has more than 400, half of which are for the needy.

The council began in a small way five years ago, by expanding its two day nurseries and making a charge to parents who could afford to pay for the extra places. Then it expanded

into after-school care, holiday schemes and a nanny agency, followed by a consultancy service for employers on childcare.

A contract to run a nursery for Department of Social Security offices just outside the council's boundary followed, and further work rolled in from as far afield as Ipswich and Glasgow. In 1992 the council decided to set up an independent, non-profit-making company to run the services, and Childcare Enterprise Ltd was born.

Last year Brent council advertised for an organisation to take on its nursery services.

Childcare Enterprise applied and won a long-term contract for seven nurseries in the borough.

Jackie Doughty, the head of children's services for North Tyneside and also chief executive of the company, said that plans to work with the private sector must be carefully monitored to ensure that quality is maintained.

"The situation that our company is in is that there are certain standards laid down about quality of service and the employment conditions of staff. There aren't lots of hungry shareholders and so it's slightly different from some private sector arrangements," she said.

Postal union sets deadline

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Royal Mail employees are responsible for almost one in three working days lost in British industry through industrial action, according to internal management estimates.

The 38,000 days lost through strikes in 1984-85, often involving unlawful wildcat stoppages, are seen as a symptom of a general breakdown in relations between management and

their employees throughout the country.

Many of the strikes have been sparked by fears over the future of the service. In particular, the Royal Mail is accused of deliberately delaying the first delivery to accommodate post that should be sent out later.

Within the last 12 months, the Royal Mail has been hit by walk-outs all over Britain, with the most most disruptive action hitting services in Scotland, London and the North-East.

Negotiators on behalf of the Union of Communication Workers are seeking assurances from management over the second post and have issued a deadline of 17 January.

If the union remains unsatisfied, senior union representatives are to call for a ballot on national strike action.

At the heart of the union's concerns is a fear over the thousands of jobs that could be lost if the second delivery is becomes extinct.

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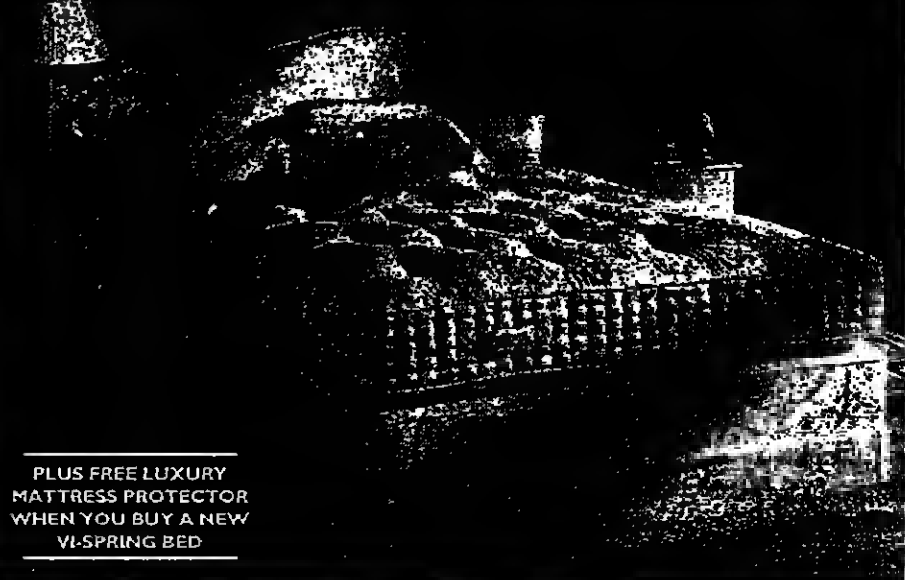
*IFC subject to acceptance and to UK residents only. Ask in-store for details. Written quotations available on request, ring (0132) 421 471. †Excludes kitchens from in-store stock, delivery costs (where applicable) and kitchens included in the 1/3 off offer. Ask in-store for details.

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Turkish elections: The Army is alarmed as ex-detainee's party upsets the Establishment

Pro-Islamic Welfare wins famous victory

HUGH POPE
Istanbul

In one of the more extraordinary upsets in Turkey's 73-year-old republic, a pro-Islamic party overtook the squabbling secularist establishment to form the biggest faction in the parliament founded by Kemal Ataturk.

The veteran Welfare Party leader, Necmettin Erbakan, yesterday claimed a famous victory as results came in from 24 December's general elections, even though he won just 21.32 per cent of the vote that brought him 158 deputies in the 550-seat assembly. "The people have chosen the Welfare Party," said the flamboyant Mr Erbakan, 69, flushed with success after years of being mocked in the political wilderness.

The prime minister, Tansu Ciller resigned, though she will stay on as caretaker until President Suleyman Demirel nominates her successor. As Mr Erbakan demanded that he be chosen, he was cheered by supporters watching him on television, some of them young militants in turbans shouting "Allah-u-Akbar (God is Great)". But Mr Erbakan needs a parliamentary majority, or 276 deputies to vote for his government programme. Mr Demirel said last week he will seek such a premier. The hint was directed at Mrs Ciller of the True Path Party and Motherland Party leader Mesut Yilmaz, who were close runners-up in the election.

The army will also be watch-

ing closely, having jailed Mr Erbakan for eight months during its last 1980-83 military takeover and charged him with trying to set up an Islamic state. Mr Erbakan was acquitted in 1985.

The officer corps purged dozens of suspected Islamic sympathisers from its ranks this month and is said to be keen that Mrs Ciller and Mr Yilmaz on the centre-right patch up their rivalry and unite to save the republican order.

The Turkish armed forces are the unwavering guardians of Ataturk's nationalism — they have adopted a contemporary, Atatürkist secular world view, and have always stood against "zealotry and reaction," the Chief of General Staff, Ismail Hakkî Karadayi warned before the elections.

Parliamentary arithmetic will not help the establishment. Mrs Ciller did unexpectedly well, winning about 135 seats with 19.20 per cent of the vote. Mr Yilmaz won 132 seats with 19.66 per cent.

But that does not make 276 votes, even if Mr Yilmaz can overcome years of animosity with "that woman" Mrs Ciller. They would have to form a government with one or both of the left-wing parties, former premier Bulent Ecevit's Democratic Left Party, which won 75 seats with 14.65 per cent of the vote, or Deniz Baykal's Republican People's Party, which won 50 seats with 10.71 per cent.

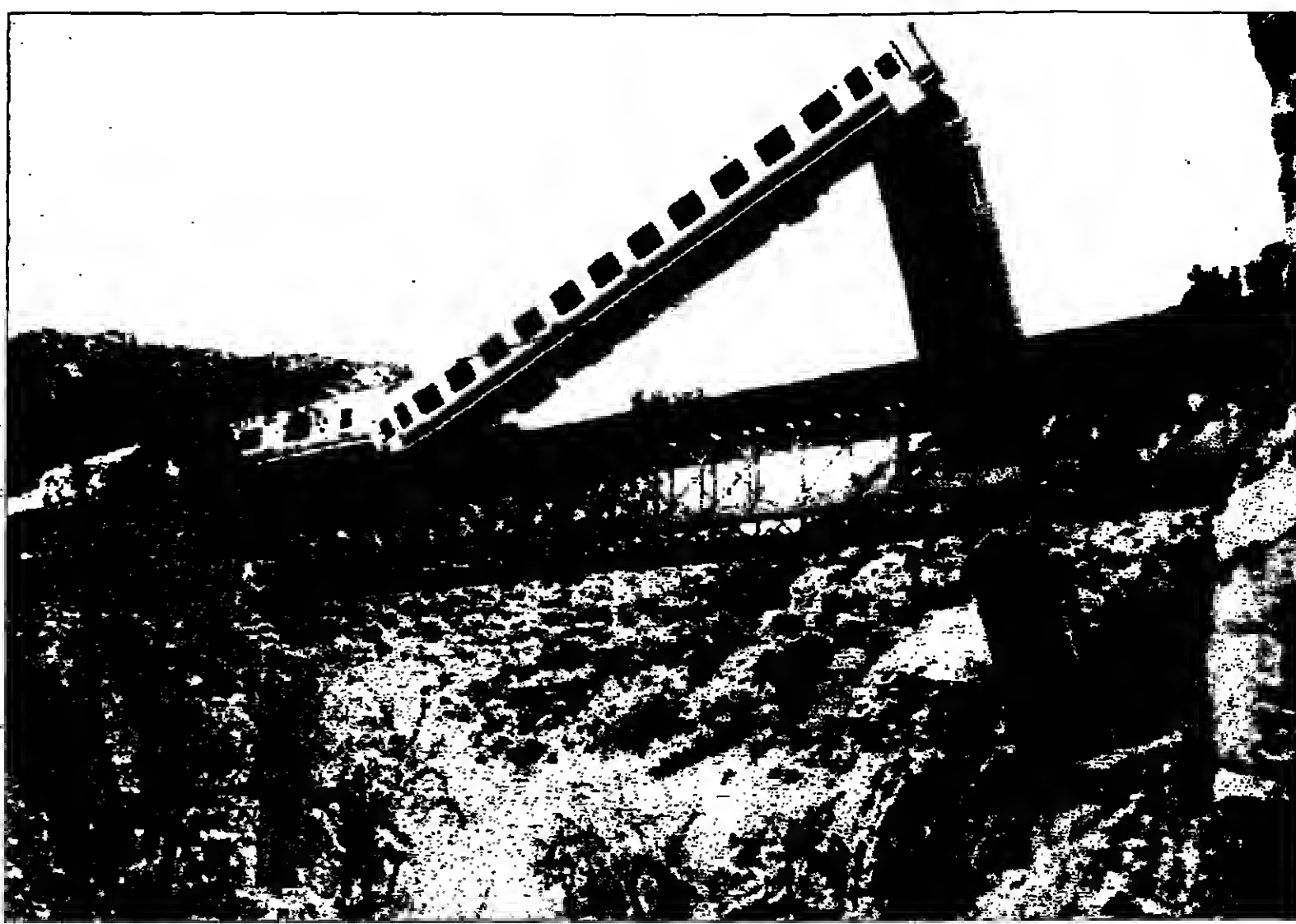
Others among the 12 competing parties failed to surmount a 10 per cent national

threshold. In a calm election with a big turnout of 85 per cent, the Kurdish nationalist left-wing party HADEP won only 4.17 per cent of the vote, showing that many Kurds, perhaps 20 per cent of the population, prefer mainstream parties.

The Turkish nationalist "Grey Wolves" of the National Action Party also fell short of the threshold, polling just 8.18 per cent.

"We must find a workable government, without prejudice," said Mr Yilmaz yesterday. He did not rule out talks with Mrs Ciller and he said he would talk with Mr Erbakan's Islamists "if they changed their philosophy."

Mr Erbakan, however, clearly hopes that as prime minister designate it is he who will be persuading conservatives in Mr Yilmaz's party to join him.



The twisted wreckage of a train belonging to the Spanish state railway, Renfe, yesterday, after an accident in which two engineers were killed and eight people injured. Renfe officials believe the train was hit by a mudslide. Photograph: AP

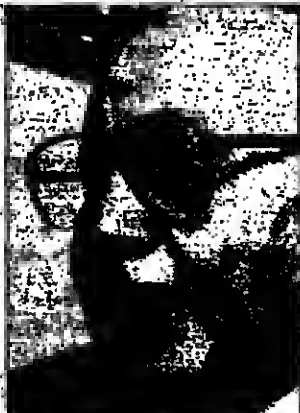
Veteran leader's shocking rhetoric

Istanbul — Having found a niche defending the Islamic vote with two parties in 1970s, Necmettin Erbakan thrived on brinkmanship in the terrible Turkish political morass of that decade, writes Hugh Pope. He became deputy prime minister three times for a total of more than three years.

Although there is now a hard-working, modernist wing in Mr Erbakan's Welfare Party, which enabled it to capture many votes that used to go to the left wing, he himself appears to have changed few of his ideas about taking taxes in kind, a banking system without interest rates and the imminent advent of an Islamic caliphate in a Muslim commonwealth.

Asked what he would do with a recent Customs Union agreement with Europe from 1 January, the culmination of a 32-year process that he has vowed to leave, Mr Erbakan said: "We want to develop relations with everyone, but that agreement was one-sided. We will call these Westerners over and make an agreement that is not exploitative."

It is hard to tell where Mr Erbakan's rhetoric ends and his real intentions begin, but shivers go down the spine of the Turkish establishment on hearing his ideas about dropping



Necmettin Erbakan: Speaker of a Muslim commonwealth

ping out of Nato and rejecting all talk of compromise on Cyprus.

As the neighbouring Tehran radio cheered a "change of orientation towards the Islamic world", Mr Erbakan's first proposal on election night was to freeze foreign currency in the Central Bank because it had signed "future" contracts amounting to about a quarter of more than \$10bn of reserves.

Seeing weeks, if not months, of such political instability ahead, the Turkish lira slumped against the dollar and the stock market dropped sharply.

Blaze survivors blockade hospital

Dahwali, India (AP) — Outraged at the poor medical treatment given survivors of a weekend fire that killed more than 500, thousands of protesters yesterday tore down a hospital wall and blocked police from removing bodies.

Saturday's fire destroyed a community hall, where school-children were putting on an end-of-term event for a crowd of about 1,000, including their parents.

Authorities said 538 people were confirmed killed, but the toll could rise to 600. Some 250 people were injured.

Residents were outraged by the scant facilities at the Civil Hospital in Dahwali, the only government-run hospital in the town 125 miles (200km) north-east of New Delhi. Doctors had to redirect hundreds of injured people to hospitals in neighbouring towns.

"Is this a way to run a hospital?" asked Suresh Singh, a protester. Mr Singh said the

hospital had only 10 beds for a population of 30,000. The hospital refused to comment.

The blaze had spread swiftly through the plywood building. Many were killed by the stampede towards the only working exit. The other exit was locked.

Police were investigating Kewal Kishan Dhanija, the hall's owner, on suspicion of criminal negligence. Mr Dhanija acknowledged the hall was built without proper permits, the *Statesman* newspaper reported yesterday.

Police said shoddy wiring at the hall may have caused the fire. They were checking the electrical wiring.

About 5,000 protesters blocked the removal of 18 bodies from the hospital. The demonstrators said they were angered by a reported remark by a state minister that such disasters were common in India. Jagdish Nehra, the minister, later denied he made the remark.

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THE DIFFERENCE IS
DEBENHAMS

moments that made the year

When private parts get exposed in public

It has not been a great year for the broadbrush theories of history. A century from now a cursory trawl of the cyberlibrary will not offer many great moments. No walls fell, no new order came into being, no colossus strode the world stage – even China's ancient puppetmaster, Deng Xiaoping, confounded medical science and failed to discover in person whether he had been exercising the Mandate of Heaven. At home, John Major's understated premiership was not topped by the disappointingly unconvincing challenge by (of all people) his Welsh Secretary.

In the absence of what the BBC habitually describes as "momentous events", 1995 will almost certainly be best remembered for the tragic assassination of Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin, the voyeuristic pleasures of the OJ trial, the extraordinary spectacle that was *Diamant* and the signing of the (as yet untested) Bosnian peace settlement.

But if nothing much was served up, that does not mean that nothing much was cooking. For, as the year progressed, one major theme emerged: as the state retreats, how should the new dispensation between private and public, citizen and the market, be controlled and regulated?

The most prosaic examples of this theme were

provided by the performance of the privatised utilities. Throughout the year, large payments to senior executives provoked the kind of outcry that suggests the public still believes they should be run as a public service. Yorkshire Water's lamentable performance in dealing with the drought was just the most extreme example of how these previously closed utilities were unused to the public scrutiny that comes with claiming to treat your customers as consumers.

All year, the names of that new breed of quasi-public servants, the regulators, have been hitting the headlines. Professor Stephen Littlechild went back to the electricity companies and demanded a better price deal for consumers; after what appeared to be a very large error of judgement, Clare Spottiswoode found herself at loggerheads with British Gas over competition in the industry; Ofcom's director-general, Peter Davis, ended the year on a low note, subject to suspicions about the closeness of his relationship with the company that he was regulating. Overall, the effect of the regulation system has been to lift into public glare debates and decisions that were once well-hidden.

But some parts of the dispute between the public and private realms were unmediated, with no

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regulators or rules to adjudicate upon them – and there the outcomes were fascinating. Some of these disputes took place in areas where the nation state has no jurisdiction. Shell, though right about the science of dumping the Brent Spar oil rig in the North Sea, was forced to back down because of the consumer outcry against it, particularly in Germany and the Netherlands. Protesters all but ended the trade in live animals from Britain, aided by the reluctance of ferry companies to invoke the ire of their half-loving customers. Consumer power, it seemed, could be mobilised to force change.

Legislators, too, found themselves responding to the public thirst for accountability. True, the Scott report on arms sales to Iraq, like the new British Library, has been promised with each turn of the seasons and yet the grass has risen, the sun has shone, leaves have fallen, chill winds have blown

and no report has been forthcoming. But the recommendations of the Nolan committee certainly did appear. Conservative MPs stood like Canute's courtiers, uncomprehendingly defying the waves of concern over their lobbying and other activities – and got very wet.

Nolan is a judge and 1995 saw m'luds become an important new element in providing checks on the elective dictatorship. A new generation of proactive judges, led by Lord Justice Taylor and exemplified by Stephen Sedley, have handed out canings to the overmighty executive in court and in print. Taylor's magisterial and contemptuous repudiation of Michael Howard's speech on sentencing to the Conservative Party conference was a welcome break with tradition. Little wonder that the judiciary are now lining up behind a Bill of Rights.

But the question of public and private rights has cut both ways. A small group of moral majoritarians, allied to a newspaper, looked at one stage as though they might detail new legislation on divorce before it was even proposed. Unrepresentative though they were, this group was articulating the sense of unease that many feel about the "breakdown" of traditional structures of responsibility. Less backward-looking, but much more important, were the strictures offered by new

Labour (in the person of Shadow Home Secretary, Jack Straw) on the anti-social activities of "squeegee merchants", addicts, alcoholics and graffiti artists. The talk of balancing rights with responsibilities is attractive, but it all raised more questions in 1995 than it answered.

Moving decisively from private into public with devastating effect was the hurt, bitterness and hope of the Princess of Wales. A heroine for the Age of Confessionalism, Diana bared her soul to millions all over the world. No one need ever suffer in silence again. Not when there is a radio phone-in or a documentary that they can talk to.

We are so morally confused, so frequently, these days, partly because the line between the public and the private is shifting so fast. So much of what we formerly thought were private matters – the grounds we use to justify divorce, the lifestyles of single mothers – have been turned into public and often political issues, while much of what was traditionally dealt with through the public sector now depends on competition, the market and regulation to satisfy citizens who have become consumers. No politics has yet proved completely adept at straddling the new worlds of the public and the private. The first to do so will have won a great political prize.

Devastating Di

At year's end, Britain has two royal families: the old, slow, official one and a freelance competitor, founded by an embittered single mother. **Martin Jacques reports**

The most compelling event of the end of 1995? The state of the royal marriage. The most riveting TV interview of the year? Princess Diana. Once again, the Royal Family has been at the centre of public debate. Not so long ago, coverage of royalty amounted to little more than title-tattle, court circulars and obsequious commentary on royal tours (not to mention small news stories in the *Independent*). No more. The state of the Royal Family, has become the most important political drama being played out in Britain. Westminster notwithstanding. As we struggle to reinvent ourselves as a nation, our most ancient institution, the monarchy, is the metaphor for our times. Far from being an irrelevant soap opera about an anachronistic and aristocratic family, it is a compelling story that touches us all.

For more than a decade Princess Diana has played one of the big parts: this year she emerged as the star hilling. She was reborn. As we watched that interview, it was hard to recall the shy princess who married the not-so-young prince in 1981. Even that more recent incarnation, the Sloane of Chelsea Harbour Clnh and expensive German cabriolets, was obliged to take a back seat to the New Di, as Tony Blair might describe her. While the Royal Family has failed to reinvent itself, Diana has comprehensively succeeded. In that interview she broke with the claustrophobic constraints of the House of Windsor and the severe limitations of her own background to present a very different kind of image.

New Di is a product of our time. She spoke with an extraordinary directness about her post-natal depression and bulimia. Here was a woman who, like so many others, has fought some desperate struggles. They have left their mark. There are no simple victories in such battles, yet she showed every sign that she has triumphed. She is stronger, more confident, more able to take on the world. Which is fortunate, because she has faced a formidable adversary in the past few years.

For what transpired during the interview was that she had fought these dark forces in the permafrost of the Royal Family. From her description, which rang true with every sentence and intonation, she was confronted with a family attitude that dismissed such behaviour as a sign of "weakness" and "madness". She was progressively marginalised and isolated. It is difficult to imagine a more inhospitable environment in which to tackle such private turmoil. It would appear that the Royal Family is as backward in

its attitude towards psychological disorders as it is towards the modern world. Somehow, though, New Di has escaped. She is the epitome of the modern woman: candid about her personal problems, able to converse about the private as well as the public, eager to explore her own identity, happy to juggle with different roles, keen to care, hooked on health, fitness and psycho-babble. She is a product of post-feminism. She is a new kind of royal, the royal for our age. As such she represents a formidable challenge to the Royal Family. Poor old Charles.

In the gentlest and nicest way possible, she threw down the gauntlet in the *Panorama* interview. She suggested that the Royal Family needed to make itself more open and accessible. She hinted that she would like to use public transport and fly scheduled. These are the first stirrings of

a "democratic" Scandinavian-style monarchy. New Di is not there yet, but the direction of her thinking is clear. Who would have thought, just two short years ago, that the greatest threat to the Royal Family as we know it would come from the wife of the next king? The ways of the world are more bizarre than the dreams of even the most imaginative pundits.

Of course it is possible that the *Panorama* interview represented the high-water mark of that challenge. Charles against Diana, let alone New Di, is a thoroughly unequal contest. But with Diana banished from the royal marriage and royal circles, the dynamics could prove very different. She will become an outsider, cut off

lock her up in the Tower of London or send her to Australia, she will remain a crucial figure in the royal entourage.

The Royal Family's instinct towards Diana from the beginning of her private difficulties has been to marginalise and exclude. That is why she was branded as a little mad. Then, following the separation, key figures in the Royal Household fought long and hard to undermine her: she called them the Enemy. After the *Panorama* interview it seemed as if, finally and belatedly, the Royal Family had been forced to recognise that ostracising was not the best course of action. Diana had to be given due recognition, allowed back into the fold, given a public role. But that was a false reading. It still wants to deal with her by punishment and exclusion. How else can one interpret the Queen's letter to Charles and Diana urging divorce? Worse, there is even talk of the Royal Family trying to roll back the years and seeking a return to splendid aristocratic isolation. The Royal Family is not just frightened of Diana, it is frightened of the modern world.

The underlying problem is not Diana, it is the Royal Family – an institution demonstrably out of date and increasingly out of touch – which exudes anachronism: the crass handling of Diana, the other-worldliness of Charles (graphically portrayed in the Dimbleby programme), the culture and habits, the stiff upper lip and distaste for emotion, the language and accents, the courtiers and the hangers-on. The institution is in desperate need of reform. The only really modern royal is Diana. The Royal Family could listen and learn, use her as a way of modernising. There is no sign of that. Instead, it is set on vindictiveness and revenge. It cannot win. The public will side with Diana and, as the years go by, the position of the Royal Family will appear increasingly strange and inappropriate.



Thoroughly modern woman: but the Royal Family seems afraid of her and afraid of the modern world

BBC

Mary Bastholm, missing since 1968, was seen with the serial killer. **Will Bennett** reflects on the mysteries of Cromwell Street

Please tell me: did Fred West kill my sister?

The words of the telegram from his parents telling him that his younger sister, Mary, had gone missing are still engraved on Peter Bastholm's mind 28 years after he received it.

"It said 'sister Mary missing, parents distressed' and that was it," said Mr Bastholm. "It was a week after she disappeared that I heard about it. I remember, too, that it was a seemingly endless 20-hour flight from Singapore, where he was serving with the Royal Navy, back to Britain and he will never forget the agonies that his parents went through after his return."

"I felt so powerless, there was nothing that I could do except be there with them," said 51-year-old Mr Bastholm, who works as a barman in Gloucester.

Until the arrest of Frederick and Rosemary West in February 1994, nothing was known about what had happened to Mary, 15. She disappeared after leaving the family home in Gloucester at 7.15pm on 6 January 1968 to catch a bus to visit her boyfriend.

Fear that something dreadful had happened to her was sometimes replaced by a desperate hope that she had decided to go off and start a new life. Eventually both were superseded by a heavy-hearted acceptance that they would never find out.

Mary's mother, Doreen, died aged 73 in 1993, the misery of not knowing what had happened to her daughter unresolved. For some time after she disappeared Doreen never left home, saying: "I want to be here in case Mary comes."

Mr Bastholm said: "It was continual distress for the family, really, but eventually it was something you tended to live with and it became sort of normal."

But when police went to the Wests' home at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, and the remains of more and more young women were found there, Mr Bastholm knew instinctively that the mystery might finally be solved.

"It was my first reaction, I thought 'here we go' and everything seemed to fall into place," he said. Sadly both for him and for his father, Christian, now 85 and partially blind, it was not to be that simple.

The evidence that Frederick West was responsible for Mary's death mounted. A local man called Vincent Oakes came forward to say

that he had seen someone he now recognised as West with Mary several times shortly before her disappearance.

West had been a regular visitor to the café where Mary worked as

The knowledge of what happened to most of the victims has not helped

a waitress and he told Janet Leach, who attended scores of his rambling interviews with police as an impartial observer, that Mary was buried at a farm.

But in those interviews, during

which West confessed to 11 murders and told detectives where the remains were buried, he never admitted to killing Mary. No one has ever been charged with her murder and her family are now left in a painful limbo.

The knowledge of what happened to most of the Wests' victims has not helped. During the trial of Rosemary West, who was convicted in November of 10 murders, it was revealed that most of the Wests' victims were bound, gagged and sexually abused before being killed and dismembered.

Mr Bastholm said: "It has not made it any better because it has brought it all back again. Years do heal wounds, but this does make you start to realise what happened to her."

Coping with the fact that the

women found at Cromwell Street spent their last days alone and terrified in a tiny cellar, unable to cry out and unable to resist, has been especially hard for all the victims' families.

But at least the relatives of those whose remains were found had the small consolation of being able to bury them, the funeral and the grave both providing focal points for grief and a feeling that at last they had been laid to rest.

Mr Bastholm, his wife, Denise, and his father, who now lives in an old people's home, do not even have that to cling to and are having to come to terms with the fact that she will never be found.

"It's very difficult, not knowing where she is buried, I am sure that she is buried at one of the sites West used, and it is obviously some-

where that she should not be," said Mr Bastholm.

Mary was killed the year before Frederick West met Rosemary but, despite this, the Bastholm family has appealed to her to tell them anything she knows about where she might be buried. So far they have had no response from Durham Prison, where she is serving 10 life sentences.

The last hope that they might be able to give Mary a decent burial almost certainly died with Frederick West, who hanged himself in his prison cell on New Year's Day 1995, taking so many of his secrets with him.

The Bastholm family's dilemma has been left unresolved by Rosemary West's trial and they feel cheated by her husband's death. For them the West case will never be over.

life and death

Calm followed the Kobe earthquake. But anger is brewing in the makeshift 'Tent Village', says **Richard Lloyd Parry**

The city with a broken heart

Mrs Kawamura, the notary's wife, does not look like a dissident and the park in which she lives does not look like a refugee camp, either. Spaced at decent intervals, between the swings and the children's sandpit, are 40 prefabricated huts, with a kitchen block, bath house and open-air stage. Mrs Kawamura sits in the headquarters of "Tent Village", beside folding tables bearing notice boards, phones, a fax machine and a giant television.

The whole thing resembles nothing so much as a well-organised archaeological dig, or a summer camp run by a wholesome Christian youth group. But, to the Kobe city authorities, Mrs Kawamura and her neighbours are outlaws, visible symptoms of an anger that has been all but forgotten in Kobe's miraculous recovery from the earthquake which devastated it 10 months ago.

One of the most remarkable things about the disaster was the calm that followed it. Even in the chaotic aftermath, with 300,000 homeless refugees surviving on inadequate supplies, looting was virtually unknown. Members of the local *yakuza* crime syndicates were pictured handing out rice balls to evacuees. Entire families lived for months head-to-toe with their neighbours in schools, gymnasiums and parks. The Japanese quality of *gaman* - uncomplaining self-restraint - seemed to have prevented a physical disaster from turning into a social catastrophe.

But 10 months later, the consequences of sublimating so much suffering in compliant

gaman are showing. Suicide and mental illness are on the increase. Legal problems, caused by the massive destruction of property, are proliferating. And, as the winter tightens its grip, there is sniggering resentment of the city government and its handling of the disaster. "We were so polite, so obedient," says Mrs Kawamura. "We hesitated to ask for anything. We forgot to insist on our rights."

Mrs Kawamura's struggle began immediately after the earthquake. No one died in her apartment building situated in a modest, low-rent quarter close to the main railway station. But it was uninhabitable, and 450 people converged on the little park, sleeping in improvised tents and cars, with no water and power and very little food.

There was also another problem. Despite a seeming lack of any preparations for the disaster, the city had allocated certain parks and recreation spaces as official evacuation areas. "This wasn't one of the designated areas," says Mrs Kawamura. "It wasn't until three days after the earthquake that we got food. Every day we requested toilets, water, food. But instead of getting more, we got less and less."

Eventually, the Japanese Self-Defence Forces raised sturdy tents for the park-dwellers. Those who could moved to hotels or the homes of relatives; those who remained organised the park into a Japanese village in miniature. Meanwhile, the city unveiled a gleaming "Phoenix Plan" for

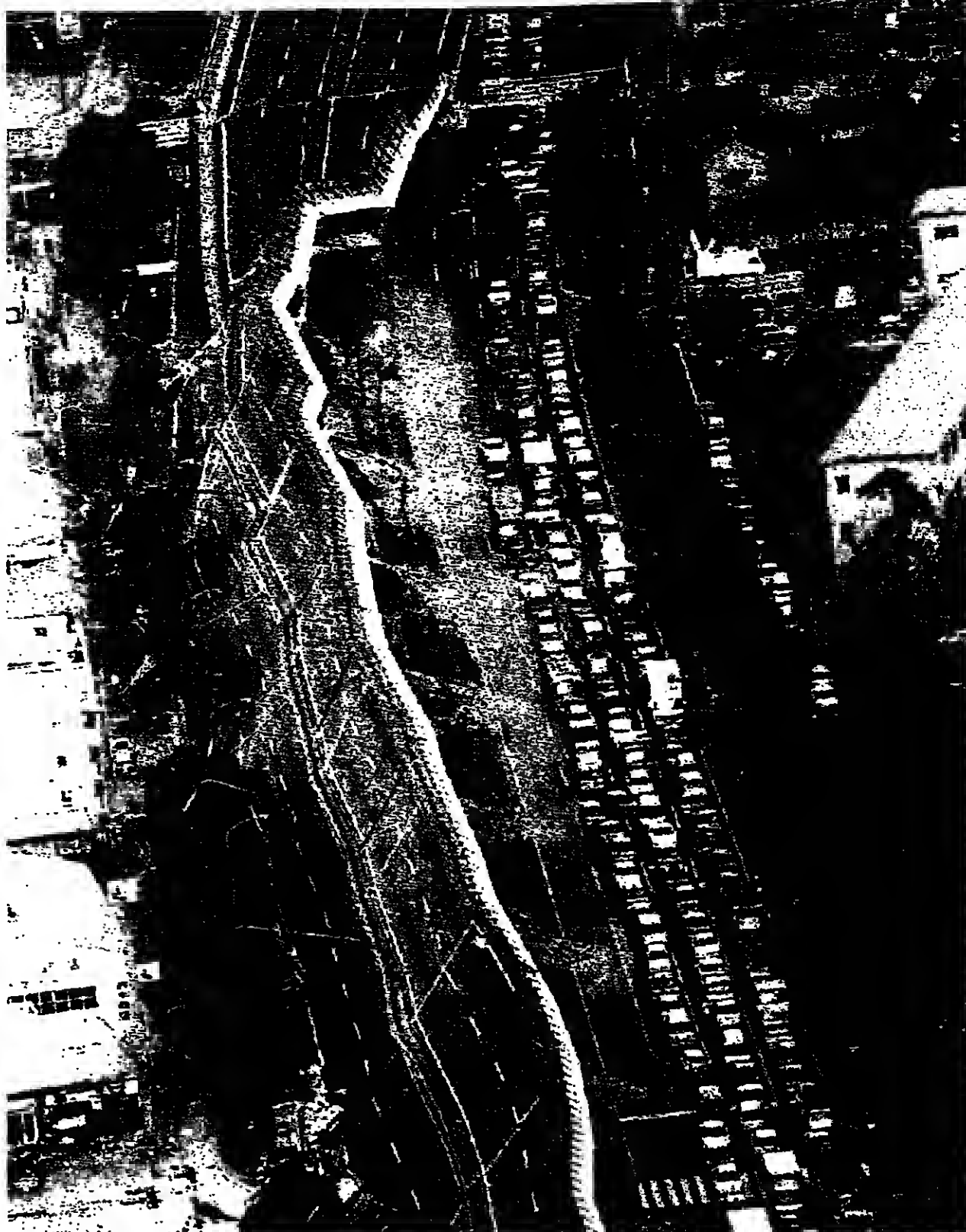
the reconstruction of Kobe: the ruined areas would be levelled and rebuilt in earthquake-resistant materials and the 60,000 remaining refugees would be relocated in temporary housing.

The official refugee houses are rent-free, but have none of the homeliness of the spontaneous tent villages - rows of grim, identical prefabs, beyond the mountains, miles out of Kobe and with inadequate transport links. Many of the refugees were glad to move there, but a minority refused. In August, the city cut off aid to the makeshift evacuation centres. Some 1,800 people, including Mrs Kawamura, stubbornly remain in illegal occupation of the parks and public buildings. "If the temporary houses were nearer, we might move," she says. "Many of the people here work in the port or the market, and it would be impossible for them to get to work on time. Some of them are old and they want to be near their hospitals and clinics. Some of us just don't want to leave here because this is our community. I don't think this is egotism. We just want to choose where we live."

The city officials insist that the land chosen for the houses was the nearest available public land of sufficient size. They cite the byzantine legal difficulties in drawing up reconstruction plans on which every apartment owner in a ruined block, for instance, can agree. But the temporary housing areas are an unsatisfactory solution and have become breeding grounds for alienation and

despair. At least 25 of their occupants have committed suicide, and there have been even more "lonely deaths" - elderly people, bereaved or separated by the earthquake from family and friends, who have died alone and remained unnoticed for days or weeks. The burden of suffering from the beginning has fallen on the poor, the old and the immigrant communities - Koreans and Thais, many of them second-generation, who clustered in the vulnerable wooden areas. Of the dead, 31 per cent were aged over 70 and a full half - nearly 3,000 people - were over 60. In the Kobe area as a whole, one in 400 of the general population died; if you were a Korean in the worst-hit areas, your chances of being killed increased to one in 150. Apart from being poor, they were politically voiceless and the communities they occupied - often old wooden houses on small plots, handed down from generation to generation - were an anachronism in bustling Kobe. With a little cynicism it is possible to see their demise as a silver lining to the economic and city planners of the ambitious city.

"At least in the school gymnasiums people had some space above their heads, at least they were with people they knew and who knew them," says Michio Sakai, a former journalist and now a professor at Kobe University. "The old communities are all being scattered now, and it almost looks deliberate: for years they've been wanting to widen the roads and redevelop the old areas, and now they can."



Edge of chaos: but as Kobe is rebuilt, unhappiness grows at the shape of the new city

Reuters

The day the Land of the Free lost its innocence

The Oklahoma City bombing forced America to confront a new enemy within. **Rupert Cornwell** reports

It seems so long ago now, that bright April morning in the great American heartland, and the split second it took a colossal truck bomb to explode. Eight months on, the tragedy of Oklahoma City is half-forgotten, an outrage amid so many other outrages, buried by the unceasing torrent of trivia, trash and tragedy that modern America seems to be. And yet, as much if not more than any other single event of recent years, it has changed the way in which the country looks at itself.

One of the most devastating acts of terrorism ever on American soil, 169 people were killed when the yellow Ryder truck containing a ton of primitive explosive detonated outside the Alfred P. Murrah federal office building in downtown Oklahoma City at 9am on 19 April, ripping half the structure away and collapsing its reinforced concrete and steel girders as if they were a card castle. A score of the victims were toddlers and young chil-

dren, delivered by their parents to a childcare centre inside the building only minutes beforehand.

Two men, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, old army buddies, have been charged with the crime, and both face the death penalty if convicted. Since that April day, the star of Newt Gingrich, the Speaker in the House of Representatives, has waxed and waned, the US Air Force pilot Captain Scott O'Grady became a national hero when he was rescued by the US Marines after his plane was shot down over Bosnia. Divine Brown and countless others have enjoyed Andy Warhol's 15 minutes of fame. General Colin Powell decided not to enter the 1996 presidential race and, of course, OJ Simpson was found not guilty. Not one of these events, however, told America as much about itself as Oklahoma City and its aftermath.

In the shock of tragedy, the

instant assessment was unanimous: America had lost its innocence. This, opined the columnists and leader writers, was the moment when a nation long the target of terrorists realised it was a breeder of terrorists as well - and terrorists who were prepared to indulge in random acts against their fellow citizens. And, as the investigation into the Oklahoma City bombing proceeded, it laid bare another America, previously only half-suspected, a submerged archipelago of far-right militias and hate groups, some of them trained and organised as small militias, united by paranoia and a loathing of the federal government and the agencies that enforce its power.

This, apparently, was the mindset of Timothy McVeigh, among the more disconcerting anti-heroes of recent times.

How was it that a pleasant, intelligent young man of 27, who had served with distinction in the Gulf war before leaving the US Army, could turn into an embittered drifter and then plotter of a deliberate slaughter of the innocent? Quite possibly, the Okla-

authorities' handling of the case. The FBI operation at Waco had been directed by agents based in the Alfred Murrah building. But disgust is one thing. A cold-blooded act of revenge against innocent employees of the federal gov-

haired, olive-skinned suspect witnesses say they saw with McVeigh in several places before the bombing and whose drawing the FBI released 24 hours after the bombing? No John Doe No 2 has since been captured. Did he exist? If so, how has he eluded the biggest manhunt America has seen in decades? If not, how did the authorities come to believe he did?

Only the trial will reveal whether McVeigh and Nichols are guilty and, if so, their motives for committing the crime - and to what extent the botched 1993 assault on Waco was a factor. But both the date and venue of the trial are uncertain. Proceedings may not now begin until autumn 1996.

Inevitably, Oklahoma City's repercussions have reached Washington. The most visible

are the ugly concrete barricades preventing cars from passing in front of the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue, and tighter security around federal buildings across the country. More subtly, President Clinton's powerful, empathetic leadership at a moment of national supreme grief began his political recovery from the electoral disaster of November 1994. After their stunning capture of both houses of Congress, the Republicans found themselves blamed, however unfairly, for the incoherent anti-government rhetoric of the party's far right and its radio talkshow host soulmates - rhetoric, critics said, which in the case of Oklahoma City had been taken only too literally. In that sense the bombing, however unfairly, reinforced the public impression of the Republicans as people who go too far, a perception which Mr Clinton will exploit to the utmost in his re-election campaign.

Politics aside, Oklahoma

showed America at its best and worst. No one who was there will ever forget the spirit of community, the unaffected Midwestern solidarity and decency that shone through the ghastly days and nights afterwards as the death toll climbed and bodies were pulled under floodlights from the rubble. But the reaction had its less uplifting side. Take Ibrahim Ahmad, an Oklahoma City computer technician, whose misfortune it was to leave that day to visit relatives in Jordan. He was arrested and detained, his name was released to the media and his family harassed, even though he had nothing to do with the crime. His misfortune was to have been of Arab extraction, near the scene of an outrage which everyone initially and automatically blamed on - to use CNN's revealing phrase - "men of Middle Eastern origin". The "America of the Salem witches and McCarthyism lives on."

It laid bare another America, a submerged archipelago of far-right militias and hate groups

homa City tragedy is a linear descendant of the one on another 19 April, at Waco, Texas, two years earlier, when 80 Branch Davidians died as federal agents stormed David Koresh's compound. McVeigh had visited the Waco site, and had been disgusted by the

ernment is quite another. Much in the case remains unanswered. Only McVeigh and Nichols have been charged, yet police have not expressly ruled out the possibility of a wider plot. What, for instance, of the mysterious John Doe No 2, the thick-

haired, olive-skinned suspect witnesses say they saw with McVeigh in several places before the bombing and whose drawing the FBI released 24 hours after the bombing? No John Doe No 2 has since been captured. Did he exist? If so, how has he eluded the biggest manhunt America has seen in decades? If not, how did the authorities come to believe he did?

Only the trial will reveal whether McVeigh and Nichols are guilty and, if so, their motives for committing the crime - and to what extent the botched 1993 assault on Waco was a factor. But both the date and venue of the trial are uncertain. Proceedings may not now begin until autumn 1996.

Inevitably, Oklahoma City's repercussions have reached Washington. The most visible

OJ Simpson's great vanishing act

Having feasted on the spectacle of the sporting hero in court, America now seems inclined to treat him like so much cold turkey, writes **Tim Cornwell**

Curiously, most of the recent action in the OJ Simpson case has shifted to Canada. It was there that the Mounties arrested a man facing death threats to Judge Lance Ito and other major figures in the trial. And it was in Toronto this month that first Marcia Clark, and then Johnnie Cochran, arrived on competing whirlwind tours, staying at the same hotel. Cochran, in town to promote an African-Canadian legal clinic, urged Canadians to stand up to police abuse in the name of justice administered fairly for all. Clark, meanwhile, was billed as the world's most recognisable prosecutor, but in a lacklustre speech she seemed to be saving her best for the book that she has sold for a reported \$4m.

One audience member took a microphone and asked her: "As a gay woman of the 1990s, I want to know, where's the short skirt and high heels?" Clark, wearing a black trouser suit, was completely silenced by this apparent reference to her as a lesbian sex object. Asked later if the delicious

rumour that she was dating the assistant prosecutor Christopher Darden were true, she said elliptically: "I'm in Toronto alone."

Barely three months after an estimated 100 million Americans watched the jury deliver its not guilty verdict, an extraordinary quiet reigns on the OJ Simpson front. The radio station that hired Kato Kaelin, the vacuum Simpson house guest and one-time soft-porn star, as a talkshow host, is now doing its best to get his dreary meanderings off the air.

America's racial talking-shop has moved on to the Reverend Louis Farrakhan and his Million Man March, and presidential non-candidate Colin Powell. OJ is alive in the world of the supermarket tabloids; elsewhere he has all but disappeared from public sight.

Blaring from the front page of the *National Enquirer's* Christmas edition is the revelation from a close family source that OJ was found drunk on the floor of his bedroom with an empty bottle of tranquilisers beside him.

According to the *Globe*, he was planning to snatch his two young children by his murdered wife, Sydney and Justin, from the custody of their grandparents.

Time magazine, by contrast, named Newt Gingrich as Man of the Year, and gave Johnnie Cochran an honourable men-

Three months after the not guilty verdict an extraordinary silence reigns

tion alongside the new technology guru Bill Gates as one of four people who shaped the events of 1995. But OJ himself rated hardly a paragraph. Having feasted on Simpson for most of the year, the country temporarily seems inclined to treat him like so much cold turkey.

The second season of the Simpson soap opera, the civil trial in the wrongful death

suit brought against Simpson by the families of Nicole Simpson and the waiter Ronald Goldman, is currently advertised for April 1996. The court case promises a thorough grilling for OJ and some of his seedier friends, in a courtroom where there is no protection of the right to silence. Yet the case may not even be televised.

There was a flicker of interest this month when Paula Barbieri, the OJ ex-girlfriend who posed for glossy magazines with very little on, was called to give preliminary testimony in the case. Barbieri, said that at 7am on the day of the murders she left a "Dear John" message on OJ's answering machine, telling him she no longer wanted to see him.

OJ himself came to court to watch, and there was a rare glimpse of him leaving through a parking lot. But his own lips have been sealed, apparently on the advice of his attorneys, pending trial.

The much talked of "infomercial" for Simpson to broadcast his innocence to the world has not materialised;

major US publishers, it is said, have even proved queasy about a new OJ book. There is much speculation about just how much of OJ's personal fortune, once estimated at \$10m, is left. The tabloids agree on one point: that Sydney Simpson, OJ's 10-year-old daughter by Nicole, is shunning her father. The *National Enquirer* recommends placing Simpson on a suicide watch.

In 1921 Fatty Arbuckle, a celebrated actor who played greedy fat men alongside the Keystone Cops and Charlie Chaplin, was found innocent, but widely assumed to be guilty, in the killing of a Hollywood starlet.

His films were banned, his career ruined and though he found work as a director under the pseudonym "Will B. Good", he died in obscurity 10 years later. "The American public is ardent in its hero worship and quite as ruthless in destroying its idols in any walk of life," Arbuckle observed. "It elevates a man more quickly than any nation in the world, and casts him down more quickly."

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life and death

Why didn't she turn back?

Did 'summit fever' kill Alison Hargreaves on K2? Steve Boggan heard her fellow mountaineers give conflicting accounts of what led her to her fate

When Alison Hargreaves went missing on K2 in August, there was a general feeling that she would emerge, battered and frozen, after a brave battle against the elements. After her conquest of Everest, unaided and without oxygen, that is what we had come to expect of the tough mother-of-two. She would be found safe and a new chapter would be written in her remarkable story.

When, therefore, five days after she went missing, the man who organised her expedition said: "Face it. She isn't coming back," there was a real and deep national sense of shock.

The search switched away from the bodies of Alison and the six other climbers who died on the world's second highest peak, and focused instead on the minutiae of their loss.

The centre for this search was not the mountain itself, but a dusty one-horse town named Skardu in the foothills of the Karakoram mountain range in northern Pakistan, at 5,000 feet the last staging post for climbers before they head off

for the 10-day trek to serious ice and rock. It was to this town, and a hotel called the K2 Motel, that the survivors of that terrible day would return with the answers to the questions the world was asking.

There had already been rumours from the people who organised the climb and from other climbers using satellite phones that the weather had been bad, too bad - and that perhaps Alison should not have made the attempt.

First off the mountain, after a week, were Lorenzo Orta and Pepe Garces, who were admitted to safety with severe frostbite. In a frenzy of media activity, sometimes speaking through cracked and bleeding lips, they confirmed that Alison was dead. They had seen her clothes scattered down the mountain. Across a glacier they had seen a body. They were sure it was hers.

They defended her decision to climb. They said the weather had been good, but deteriorated within minutes into a vicious 100mph blizzard that plucked climbers from the ice

and discarded them down the mountain.

Within 24 hours, their claim that the weather had been good was to be contradicted. First Captain Fawad Khan, the expedition's army liaison officer, said: "It was suicidal to climb and I told her so." Then another Spaniard, John Lazkano, who had earlier climbed with Lorenzo Ortiz, one of those who died, said: "I was at Concordia, below base camp. The mountain was covered in cloud above Camp 2. I would not have climbed. The problem was that there were many people pushing each other for the summit and they felt a false sense of safety in numbers."

Scott Fischer, an American who reached the summit of nearby Broad Peak at lunchtime on 13 August, said: "When we were coming down, the wind was coming up incredibly strongly and it was bitterly cold. We could see the people on K2 through our spotter scope and we knew they were going to be in trouble. I couldn't understand why they weren't turning back, because even if they made

the summit, they would have to come down in darkness."

The definitive version took almost two weeks to arrive back, in the form of Peter Hillary, son of Sir Edmund Hillary, the joint-first man to climb Everest. He stopped his climb and turned back as conditions worsened on the mountain. Quite simply, he said, those who went on were suffering from "summit fever".

"There was a bizarre kind of chemistry in that group that meant they were going for the summit no matter what. Alison had shouted down to me, 'Come on up. Use the red rope.' Jeff Lakes [one of the climbers who died] decided to go for it, but I just sat there and looked at these dots ahead on the traverse. I was amazed, because Alison was calling down as cloud drifted across her face. I could only see her intermittently."

When he reached Base Camp at 22,000 feet at 7.30pm and was told the other climbers had reached the summit an hour earlier, he recalled saying: "Oh, my God." He added: "When you are on a summit



Conquerer conquered: Alison had become disillusioned with mountaineering

Emotion, abortion and tragedy

The brief life of Siamese twins crystallised a debate over the sanctity of life, says Polly Toynbee

It seemed like a time warp. Suddenly the ethics of abortion were back on the agenda this year, although the principles of abortion and embryology have long been entrenched in law. A number of events and cases involving unborn babies crystallised into a stark argument between two pressmen: Dominic Lawson, now editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, and Ian Hargreaves, former editor of this newspaper. Both fathered babies suffering severe abnormalities. They approached the calamity in quite different ways.

This would have been simply a private family matter, no more than a sad human interest story, had Lawson not turned the birth of his Down's syndrome daughter into a political issue. He turned the moving description of his experience into an emotional tirade against modern screening, with its concomitant offer of abortion to parents of abnormal foetuses who choose it. He called it "half-baked, superficial", and compared this to Chinese infanticide and Hitler's extermination of the mentally deficient.

He described how he and his deeply Catholic wife, Rosa Moynock, had decided not to opt for a screening test: since they would have rejected abortion anyway, there was not much point. After the birth one or two people wisely asked if they had taken the tests. "My wife says she thinks it will be difficult to remain friends with such people," he wrote, and deplored the "state-sponsored annihilation of viable sentient beings". His article, originally in the *Sunday Telegraph*, was reprinted in the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph*.

In the other corner, by grotesque coincidence, Ian Hargreaves and his wife, Adele Blakeborough, a Baptist minister, found themselves in a similar predicament. They had decided to have the tests. They revealed a yet more severe abnormality in their unborn child: Patau's syndrome. Doctors told them that were their daughter to be born she would probably not survive longer than a month. They opted for abortion. Hargreaves also wrote a long and moving account of their experience, in the *Sunday Telegraph*. Gently, he took issue with Lawson: "In attacking doctors and politicians, I felt you were also making a moral judgement on parents who have faced similar choices and made a different decision."

Lawson's anti-abortion arguments were, as one would expect, some of the most cogent and rational to be expressed in what is usually a sentimental and emotional approach to the subject by people of his persuasion. He made mincemeat of the argument that suggests it is somehow better for the child not to be born, since it is always better to be than not to be - ask any handicapped person. But because he has a virtually religious belief in the right of that child to be born, he puts that above the right of parents not to carry a pregnancy to term. Those of us who strongly support abortion on demand do so on the grounds that the mother's right over her body supersedes the putative child's rights.

Outsiders mainly stood by on the sidelines. There was such a strong sense in Lawson's argument of rationalising tragedy, looking for good in the face of calamity. He wrote of his love for his baby, his happiness at her existence. Others shook their heads and thought of the troubles ahead, in adolescence and adulthood. (Though for the better-off, the dreadful dilemmas of caring for the handicapped later in life are less pressing.)

The other event that raised these issues was the birth of Siamese twins to Melanie and Brian Astbury. Shortly before the birth, they sold their story exclusively to the *Daily Mail*, which hailed them as heroes for carrying through a pregnancy fraught with danger and almost certain tragedy.

When I talked to their obstetrician, I gained the impression that they had not had the true dimensions of what faced them spelt out clearly and forcefully enough. I asked the doctor if he would urge his wife to continue with the pregnancy in these circumstances: he said he would encourage her to have a termination. Had he said this to the Astburys? No.

I wrote an article expressing concern that often doctors and nurses give the neutral information, instead of stressing the hardships ahead in these situations. I was deluged with angry letters from the anti-abortion lobby, and Lynda Lee-Potter, defending the *Mail's* exclusivity, launched her own offensive, twice. I also had many letters from medical staff confirming that they were intimidated out of advocating abortion strongly enough, for fear of the wrath of Catholic colleagues.

Tragically the Astbury twins, joined at the abdomen and with tangled internal organs, died a while later of a sudden infection, one 20 minutes before the other, having been photographed exclusively in the *Mail*. A brief article confirmed that the Astburys "had no regrets", and then the Astburys were forgotten.

For as long as the argument continues, there is a danger that many parents will be persuaded, in a sentimental flurry of determination, to carry on with pregnancies of handicapped children, without understanding quite what this will do to their lives later. Some handicapped groups regard this as some kind of genocide, but it is nothing of the sort. Treating the disabled well once they are born and mothers' decisions to bring them into the world are different issues.

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stories of the year

The sacrifice we should never forget

Could we fall silent in remembrance? Not exactly. But **Paul Vallely** found an inner quiet

It has been a year of remembering. Or of attempting to. It was 50 years since the end of World War Two and no one was quite sure whether modern Britain was up to the task of paying dignified respects.

Would the younger generation write the whole thing off as history? In an attempt to forestall that, every secondary school in England was sent a government pack on VE Day and the Holocaust Educational Trust, a privately funded body, supplied every comprehensive with a version of the film *Schindler's List*.

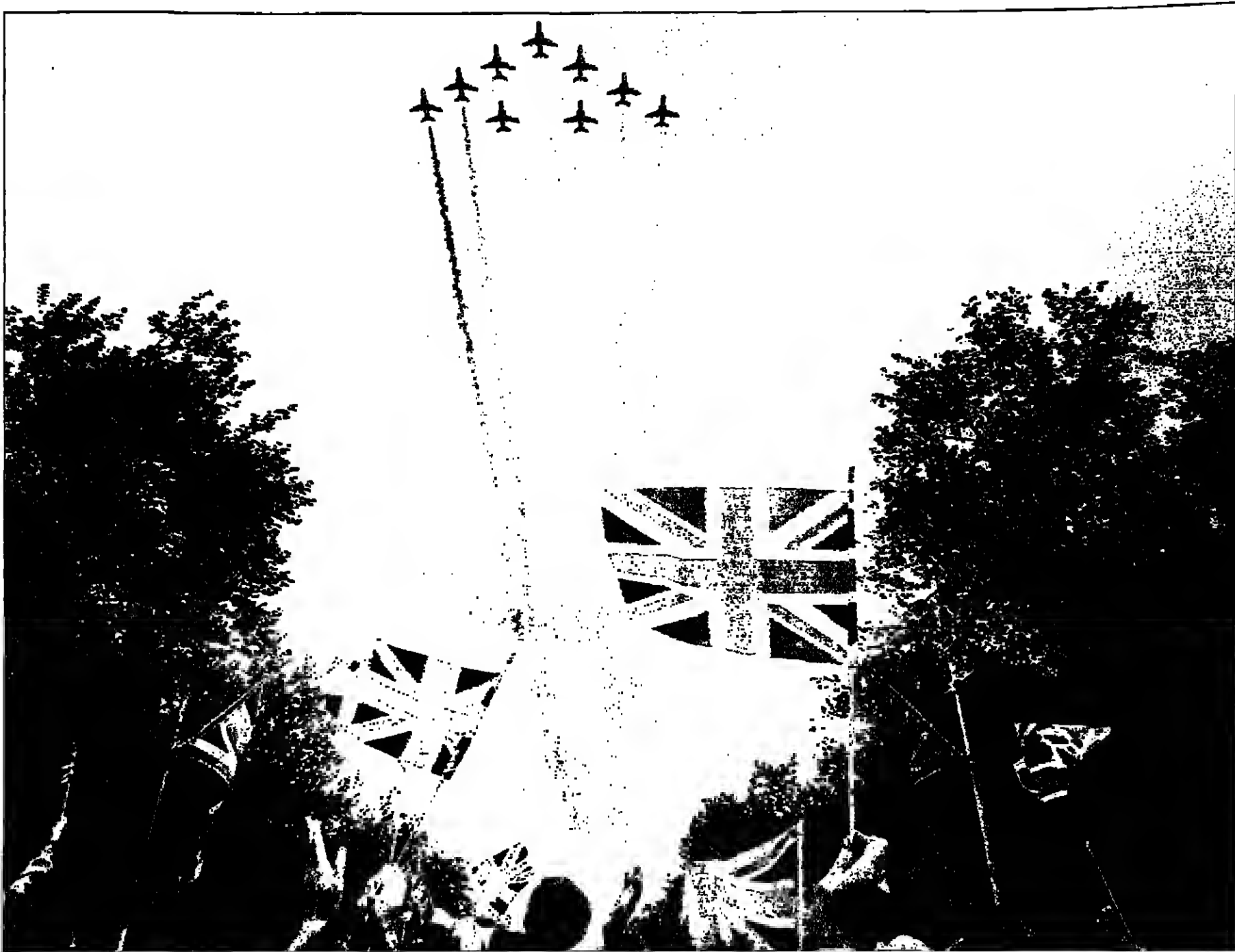
In the event, pupils, sent out to interview their grandparents, were strangely moved by the experience.

It had been touch and go. The year before, the commemoration of D-Day was dogged by rows between those who wanted to mourn and those who wanted to celebrate. The Government did its best to misjudge the mood with the VE Day weekend, with plans for a concert at Wembley with Vera Lynn, a Portsmouth event called "Brylcreem, bullets and bunting", and a chain of beacons being lit by the Queen in Hyde Park.

But in the end it was all rather different. A hush descended upon the nation in the two minutes before the Queen put the torch to the fire of remembrance. That evening in May, guests at smart dinner parties in Islington, climbers on Dartmoor's granite Haytor Rock, bus drivers in Bristol, bingo-players in Glasgow and the crowd at Blackburn Rovers' Ewood Park football ground all fell silent.

It was as if, for one moment, the entire nation bowed its head as it remembered the sacrifice made by the fathers and grandfathers of those who survived.

It was an instant plucked from the rush of modern life in which something more enduring could be glimpsed. Those who could not recall none the less held the present in abeyance – for that moment – in homage to those who were unable to savour our brave new world.



Flypast for victory: fears that a younger generation would feel nothing but indifference 50 years after VE Day were not borne out

Photograph: Peter Macdonald

By contrast, VJ Day in August, to mark the 50th anniversary of victory over Japan, was a time for those who could not forget. The memorial to the end of the war in the Far East was a particularly difficult time for former prisoners of war because of the mental and physical abuse they suffered at the hands of a nation which, unlike the Germans, refused to make a

proper apology. In the Japanese they still had an enemy; the rest of us could only look on silently, in uncomprehending solidarity with their pain.

There were those, of course, for whom all this was not enough. The British Legion tried to revive the custom of marking two minutes' silence on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month – the

anniversary of the armistice that brought the end of the First World War.

It was a custom which fell in desuetude when the Second World War began. The attempt to revive it provoked a mixed response, although a novel about that war won the Booker prize, evidence of its enduring fascination for us.

Hopes that Britain would fall into a respectful silence went unfulfilled. The BBC carried on broadcasting. Many shops and businesses that had pledged to cease trading for two minutes forgot. When one cab driver tried to stop near Oxford Circus, other cabbies blasted their horns.

Yet in many parts of the country there was a moment of quiet and

respect, which those who took part in will recall. In Wiltshire, the Prince of Wales, who was riding out with the Beaufort Hunt, brought his horse to a standstill to pay his tribute with 300 other riders. At the Lakeside shopping centre in Thurrock, Essex, Christmas tree lights and fountains were switched off and thousands of shoppers stood still at 11am.

It was the year that childhood as we thought we knew it finally died. But can we be so sure?

The Rev Peter Foster remembers how, overnight, the children vanished from the streets of Eastham, on Merseyside, after Robert Gee, 12, and Paul Barker, 13, were victims of a knife attack while fishing at a local pond. "There was such a terrific sense of shock," recalls Mr Foster, "the streets emptied." He led the joint funeral for the boys – who had been best friends for most of their short lives.

Six months after the murders, the children's parents face an agonising start to the new year. That the flow of donations to a memorial appeal which now exceeds £20,000 continues to be steady suggests their neighbours have not forgotten their pain or loss.

"The children are out again," says Mr Foster. "But when you speak to their parents you realise that beneath the surface the fear is still there."

As 500 people filed into St David's United Reform Church for the boys' funeral in July, police were already hunting the killer of Sophie Hook, 7, who was snatched from a tent in her aunt and uncle's garden in Llandudno, North Wales. Sophie, who was strangled, was abducted just a day after the killings on Merseyside.

Camping and fishing: two innocent childhood pursuits whose very ordinariness seemed to imbue public outrage at the murders with a sense of heinous violation. The summer of 1995 will go down in the record books for its high temperatures. But for many it will be the time when the death of childhood was finally confirmed.

Four other children met violent deaths that summer. In August, Louise Sellars, 15, was strangled on farmland near Wigan, Greater Manchester, and the body of Darren Fawns was discovered on a golf course near Loch Neagh in Northern Ireland. The following month, Rachel Lean was stabbed to death near her home in Buxton, Norfolk, and Naomi Smith, 15, was found with her throat cut in a park 100 yards from her home in Nuneaton, Warwickshire. Naomi had gone out to post a letter and never returned.

The number of children killed by strangers in 1995 will probably not exceed previous years. At six or seven a year it is still, thankfully, a rare crime. But Home Office statistics do nothing to comfort parents. Surveys show that the majority agree with Mr Foster that his own childhood was safer than



Sophie Hook: snatched

that of his own three children. Last year a MORI survey found that more than 90 per cent of parents believed their children would see more crime and violence than they had.

Parents rate abduction and assault as their greatest fear for their children. And there are warnings that parental anxiety is seriously restricting children's lives. According to a Policy Studies Institute survey, 80 per cent of seven- and eight-year-olds went to school on their own in 1971; only 9 per cent were doing so 20 years later.

Peter Wilson, director of the charity Young Minds, says 1995 has exposed the dichotomy inherent in modern childhood: "On the one hand, there is probably a greater awareness of the importance of childhood than there has been for some time. But on the other hand, the murders and abuse continue. I think adults are more anxious about their own lives and they are taking it out on children."

But he agrees that it was the children who survived in 1995 who brought the weakness of the young into sharper focus. The most chilling testimony to the vulnerability of modern children came at Winchester Crown Court when Anne-Marie West's harrowing evidence laid bare the violence perpetrated by her parents.

Mary Braid

A modern vision of heaven and hell

Drugs are both demons and wonder cures. Why are we so confused by them today? **Peter Popham** reports

Any society needs an enemy. And while Brussels, the Bosnian Serbs and foreigners at large did a decent job for many people, 1995 was the year when drugs became Public Enemy No 1. The face of Leah Betts beamed out from hoardings next to the single word "sorted" (in the language of the rave, it meant she had enough drugs). Leah Betts was the sacrificial lamb who died, the "little ship", in her father's pathetic words, wrecked by violent seas.

But every society also needs a god, a heaven and a promised land, and the odd thing about this year was that drugs fulfilled those roles, too. Drugs meant hope of health, of longer life, of freedom from pain. Against such diseases as AIDS, cancer, multiple sclerosis, drugs offered hope of victory. And this was a year in which advances were made in combating all those diseases.

What is alarming is how we are able to hold two such divergent views of drugs in our minds. It is like having clearly defined concepts of heaven and hell – but only one word for both.

This year has brought home to us the degree to which drugs have permeated teenage culture. Successive reports showed how, for example, cannabis use has doubled in 10 years and the number of cannabis users convicted has nearly tripled; how addicts of hard drugs have increased by 20 per cent in a year. One survey suggested that in the near future it will be those adolescents that decline to buy drugs who will be considered deviant.

The trend was unmistakable and posed serious questions for every parent – the most urgent being: how to protect our children? Besides keeping them locked up 24 hours a day, there were no obvious answers. Since Jim Callaghan's Dangerous Drugs Act of 1971, governments have pursued the goal of suppressing all dangerous drugs through policing, propaganda and official rhetoric. This year's statistics prove that the policy has failed. Is it not time to try something new?

When, in September, Clare Short posed that question with regard to cannabis, Tony Blair

obliged her to shut up. We have a stunning ability to keep our feelings about drugs locked in hermetically sealed containers in our brains. In an article earlier this month in the *Sun*, the television comic Joe Longthorne "sensationally confessed" to rampant abuse of heroin, LSD, Ecstasy and the tranquilliser Temazepam. His biographer recounted all the coke-laced joints, the pills and booze the comedian had got through. Casually, it was also mentioned that Longthorne had "recently won a six-year battle against a rare form of blood cancer" in the treatment of which presumably drugs had played a significant role. Yet despite the powerful urge to keep good and evil drugs corralled apart, this year has seen increasing signs of leaching between the two. Administered by a doctor, Temazepam is a common tranquilliser, bought on the streets of Glasgow, "jellies" were blamed for leading to memory loss, blackouts, violent behaviour and "numerous deaths". The two substances are the same. Cannabis, Clare Short discovered, is far too evil to be discussed in the House of Commons; but many multiple sclerosis sufferers have found it relieves their symptoms. A former Army captain from Tunbridge Wells, diagnosed as having MS in 1989, said he smoked it every day. "Cannabis is not a cure," he said, "it's a management tool which helps to improve my quality of life."

We demand to draw a line, to be told plainly when drugs are evil and when they are good. Perhaps the simplest test is whether they are dispensed by a dealer or by a doctor – but in

1995, even this test has proved fallible. One of their number, Dr Clive Froggatt, an architect of the NHS reforms, was convicted of supplying heroin illegally, and confessed to being a junkie himself. After Leah Betts's collapse, a reporter on a national paper went to a rave; the Ecstasy-popping ravers he interviewed turned out to be doctors, too.

We deserve to be confused: our simple-mindedness invites it. Breathlessly, the press reports the success of a "growth hormone wonder drug" in giving a man aged 60 the "stamina, energy and sex drive" of a 30-year-old. But when an 18-year-old desires a far more modest alteration of reality – to stay awake all night, feeling good – we cannot condemn too fast.

What is being played out is the modern form of the ancient struggle between the generations. Since the mid-Sixties teenagers have identified themselves by the drugs they prefer: it is one of the ways in which they slither out of their elders' embrace. Inevitably, it incurs adults' fear and anger, for that is part of the game.

Meanwhile, the middle-aged have their own game to play: keeping the woes of mortality at bay as long as possible. And as the middle-aged control the media, it is no surprise which impulse gets the better press.

It is time we, and our politicians in particular, grew up. The reason we fear for our children's lives is not because they are taking drugs *per se*, but because the quality of the drugs they are taking is uncontrolled. God knows what they are ingesting. Leah Betts died not from Ecstasy but from an overdose of water; indirectly, she died from a paucity of information.

We need to recognise that we are living not in a world of good and evil drugs but in an environment saturated by chemicals of every description. Dr Hamish Cameron, head of medical affairs for the drug manufacturer Zeneca, says: "There is no such thing as a safe drug." Recognising that truth, our role should be to act as sensitive guides. That way many other "little ships" may be saved from wreck.



Mafia. Crime. Where quiet moments are rarely found.

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Holidays

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stories of the year

Warm enough for you? Er, quite. John Walsh loved it. There was smog, sweat, and pavements full of flushed diners...

The red hot summer

Summer started in Oxford on May Smorning, with foolish revellers jumping into the Cherwell and game classics students drinking lager-top in pubs at 5.45am. It settled in, all cloudless skies and still air, in late May, started to bake with a vengeance around the second week in June, took a couple of days off for experiments with wind, rain and hail, then came on like the Shetland Sky for July and August. Weeks and weeks of it. "It's the ozone layer," we told each other. "The warnings were all true. We're all, you know, doomed." Sometimes it was a gentle, zephyr-borne heat, little pockets of warmth that burrowed in the folds and crannies of your shirt. Sometimes, when lying on your back at lunchtime beside the Canary Wharf fountain, it seemed to want to roast you with an angry, spiced malevolence, like an ultra-violet vindaloo.

Streets and gardens are what we will remember about the summer of '95. Of course, London has tried the al fresco thing before, umpteen times, but wistfully (the Argyll restaurant in Chelsea, now sadly closed down, introduced a tables-in-the-doorway facility, half on the pavement, for those unable to make the full commitment). But suddenly, it came together. Round shiny tables and squat basket-weave chairs blocked your path on every high street from Ealing to Cockfosters. Opportunistic hairdressers encouraged waiting clients to sit at tables outside with their copies of *Harpers & Queen* and bottles of Ballygowan. Old Compton Street in Soho spilled over with knowing ducks in skinny vests, cruising the boys from Berlin and Copenhagen as they strolled up and down.

The whole Old Compton strip was transformed. It like a stage-set, its upper windows filled with browsing scenesters drinking Czech Budweiser from the bottle. No one, it seemed, went to bed (except for sex), preferring the hot street. The streets of London disappeared beneath an onslaught of furniture. Calling for lunch with a publisher friend in June, I was led down three alleyways off Oxford Street and found myself in Al Fresco City - the whole of James Street had become a row of white tablecloths and expansive gestures. It could have been Naples.

Garden parties flourished. The breast pocket of your lightweight Montauk suit has probably still got some



Under the sun: sometimes it was a gentle, zephyr-borne heat. Sometimes, it wanted to roast you with a spiced malevolence, like an ultra-violet vindaloo. Brian Harris

We've made peace across the frontline

For years, Nicola, an east Belfast Protestant, and Joanne, a west Belfast Catholic, would see each other's faces regularly but they never spoke. They would see each other in the waiting-rooms of the Crumlin Road and Maze prisons as they queued to visit their husbands.

Nicola's husband was serving a sentence for a loyalist guns offence; Joanne's husband was inside for an IRA bombing. The men left on the outside two women with problems: when they first saw each other, Joanne had three children, while Nicola had two and another on the way.

Now Joanne says, "All those years we never spoke, just looked at each other, up and down. We just kept ourself to ourself." Today, with peace, they have become friends, working together in a prison welfare organisation.

They sit together side by side, giggling about the old days when they would share the same room but never speak. Now they have broken two barriers: they not only talk together in the most friendly way, but they ignore the old regulations that you do not talk about politics or the troubles except in the company of "your own side".

In terms of many of their attitudes, they are still on different sides but, most unusually for Belfast, they have found the knack of preventing their disagreements from escalating into conflict. (This is still Belfast, and they are nervous about having their names used in a newspaper.)

They differ about whether the peace will hold. Nicola, the Protestant, does not believe loyalist groups will return to violence unless the IRA does. She has, however, the impression, from the statements of Gerry Adams and others, that the republican side may be less solidly for the peace.

She says: "I think the republican side is shaky at the moment. I think it's going to break and there will be violence again. There's an awful lot on the loyalist side who will start up again, too, once it does break, because there are lots of peo-

David McKittrick meets two Belfast women who overcame old enmities to become friends

contrasting views on the arms decommissioning issue. "No," says Joanne, "I don't think they should hand over weapons until they're 100 per cent sure that they're going to get something out of it. They didn't fight all those years for nothing. I think if it's genuinely over then they should be handed in, if they're serious - both sides. But sure at the moment they're not even sitting round the table to talk about it. If they hand over all their weapons now, what else have we got to fight with? I mean there's always the threat there, we'd still have our weapons."

They differ, too, on the prisoners' issue. Joanne, whose husband has another three years to serve, wants the jail doors opened. She argues: "What's the big deal about keeping the prisoners in now - they can no longer do anything, the war's over."

Nicola, whose husband has just been released, is not so sure. "But what about the victims?" Joanne touches her arm. "Well yes, I understand, don't get me wrong, I understand, but there have been victims on both sides. You have to ask, are you going to keep going on and on? You must show that it's got to stop somewhere - keeping the prisoners in will only keep it going."

Nicola replies: "I can understand your personal feelings and all that - there's nothing worse when they're locked up in there and people say, 'what about the victims, they can't get up out of their graves, they have no life'."

"But," Joanne continues intently, "what I'm saying is that it's got to stop somewhere."

Nicola replies: "Catholic families might be raging to see loyalist prisoners being let out, somebody who has shot their husband. But I understand. Something has to be done somewhere. After so long, I think we deserve peace."

And they nod their heads together, not in agreement but in mutual respect and liking. These two women, from very different traditions, have learnt the hard way that agreeing to differ is not the same as surrender.

The two women also hold

Major, Heseltine, Redwood 6 Portillo, leader writers 0

It was the gamble of the year - and it paid off. Donald Macintyre reports

Because it didn't change the world, it is all too easy to underestimate the gamble John Major took in June by resigning the Tory leadership and inviting allcomers to challenge him for his job. He certainly thought he might lose; indeed, he took some care to persuade those closest to him that this might be the outcome. But he didn't, and six months on, it is rather easier than it was then to identify the gainers and losers from the most important domestic political event of 1995.

John Major may not have transformed his personal - or for that matter his party's - poll rating, but the benefits he reaped from victory are tangible: consider first what might have happened if he had not precipitated a contest. The whips' office appeared to have lost a grip: virtually the only topic of chatter among MPs was the prospect of a contest. Worst of all, Westminster was rife with rumour that Norman Lamont would announce before autumn that he intended to challenge Major for the leadership in November, thus ensuring more bedlam at the October Tory party conference than at any time since 1963 when Hailsham, Butler and Howe were jockeying for the succession to Macmillan.

Secondly, he made his own luck: by failing to tell John Redwood personally that he had decided to resign the leadership, he gave Redwood an excuse to challenge him - paradoxically a better outcome than if Lamont had taken him on as a "stalking horse". A sizeable vote for Lamont, not to mention simple abstentions, would have counted exclusively as a protest against Major. The campaign by Redwood, who had been in the Cabinet, meant a real contest. Many of the 89 votes for Redwood could be depicted as positive for him rather than negative for Major.

Finally, while a leadership contest in 1996 is still theoretically possible, all probability is against it. Nothing else, by securing a comfortable first-ballot margin under the rules, Major had reminded his party that he is rather good at winning elections.

This is one reason why John Redwood was also a gainer. Long the junior partner to Michael Portillo as a government Euro-sceptic, the former Welsh Secretary spectacularly demonstrated his political instincts by resigning his Cabinet seat and challenging for the leadership. After a shaky if exciting start in which the more eccentric of



Mind your back: the Prime Minister resigns in No 10's back yard. PA

the hard-line Euro-sceptics like Theresa Gorman and Tony Marlow appeared on the platform at Redwood's first press conference, Redwood fought a workmanlike if unglamorous campaign. The result, with a significantly higher personal vote than most MPs expected, put him at the head of the party's backbench right wing, and helped indirectly to generate the funds to establish his own personal think-tank Conservative 2000. It leaves him in position for after the general election as a serious leadership contender or at the very least, a key player in a post Major shadow Cabinet.

Michael Heseltine must also count among the gainers. There wasn't a second ballot; he was denied the most glittering prize of all. But Heseltine certainly got the next best thing. The question of whether there was a "deal" in which Heseltine called off his troops and delivered Major his victory in return for the deputy premiership will continue to preoccupy MPs. Certainly, polling of former Tory voters suggests that it is a widely held perception in the electorate that Major's victory depended on Heseltine: this may be one reason why the leadership contest has not more dramatically improved the Major opinion poll rating. In their

over lunch with two BBC journalists to give rise to a story that he could well be Prime Minister by September.

Portillo, therefore, did not have a good war, but don't write him off. He remains the most charismatic figure on the Tory right, despite all Redwood's well-founded claims to right-wing candidacy for the leadership, and not to mention his own ill-judged "Who dares wins" speech to the Tory conference later in the year.

Political journalism was a bit of a loser, too. It wasn't only newspapers that came out against Major (most of the Tory press apart from the Express titles) and predicted, as well as prescribed, his demise. Political correspondents in general became so caught up in the excitement of the threat to Major's premiership that they failed to listen to one or two of the still small voices. There was one passionately pro-Heseltine MP for example, who predicted there wouldn't be a second ballot and that Major would win decisively in the first.

All of this poses the biggest question of all: did Major win against Redwood because the party is in the end still dominated by the centre and left - and didn't want a right winger? Or did he win (and this seems on balance a good deal more likely) for precisely the opposite reason - the party has swung to the right and those that wanted Heseltine as Prime Minister dared not precipitate a second ballot by abstaining because they might wind up with Michael Portillo instead?

Certainly, some more astute MPs - the pro-Heseltine voice, for example - had pointed out that many of the core Heseltine supporters in the 1990 leadership contest had subsequently left Parliament and that a Heseltine victory in the second ballot was by no means a foregone conclusion. The Major camp was adept at warning potential pro-Portillo abstainers that they might wind up with Heseltine if there was a second ballot, but they also persuaded a good many pro-Heseltine MPs that they could get Portillo - or Redwood - if there was a second ballot.

The fact is that the abstentions which might have narrowed Major's victory margin to the point that a second ballot would have been required never happened. Neither camp was ready to risk the all-out civil war that now seems inevitable after the general election.

peace and conflict

We have seen the enemy and it is us

Yigal Amir's arm stretches out and there is a jet of flame from his hand directed at Yitzhak Rabin's back. The prime minister's bodyguards begin to turn, but it is too late. On the roof of the shopping centre behind Tel Aviv town hall Roni Kempner, an amateur with a video camera, records the moment when Mr Rabin is mortally wounded, an instant that may well shape Israeli politics for the rest of the century.

In one sense, the film shows nothing new. There is no second gunman. Amir acts very much as he himself had demonstrated during a staged re-enactment of the assassination a few weeks ago. After waiting nonchalantly at the bottom of the steps down which he knew Mr Rabin must walk at the end of a peace rally, he simply circled behind the prime minister and fired.

But in a broader sense, Kempner's film explains exactly why Mr Rabin died. No Arab would have been able to dawdle close to where the Israeli prime minister and foreign minister were about to pass without being immediately arrested. Yet there is Yigal Amir in his blue T-shirt (his only gesture at disguise was to remove his black skull cap), allowed to wait for his victim without being asked a single question about his presence.

In the immediate aftermath of the assassination, defenders of the Shin Bet security agency explained its failure by saying that members had internalised the belief that a Jew would not kill a Jew. There is probably some truth in this, though the belief that national homogeneity in Israel is significantly greater than in other countries has been disproved repeatedly since the foundation of the state.

In 1948, Rabin himself had been in command of forces that attacked and sank the arms ship *Altalena*, chartered by the right-wing leader Menachem Begin to bring in weapons. To a degree that non-Israelis seldom realise, the politics of Israel is driven by the friction

The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin exposed the deep divisions within Israeli society. Patrick Cockburn assesses the significance of his death



Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres greet the crowd at the peace rally of 4 November, moments before Rabin's murder

between religious and non-religious Jews. Surveys show that 19 per cent of Jews in the country go to synagogue every day and a similar number never go at all.

It is this religious division that is at the heart of differences between left and right. It has fed the venomous opposition to the Oslo accords, under which Israel is making a partial withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. To Yigal Amir and

the religious right, this is abandoning land that God gave to the Jews. Months before he killed Mr Rabin, senior rabbis called on soldiers to mutiny rather than obey orders to dismantle military bases on the West Bank.

To many Israelis and much of the outside world, these tensions seemed marginal. The rise of the religious right after the Israeli conquest of the West Bank in 1967 had passed

largely unnoticed. Few cared that the mainstream religious establishment in Israel had become extreme. A quarter of the population goes to religious schools. Under the so-called *hesder* programme, students from religious colleges do their military service together with their rabbis. Given the norms of the world in which Yigal Amir lived, killing the prime minister might well seem a logical choice.

How much has changed since Mr Rabin died on 4 November? In the weeks after the assassination there was a rush to the political centre. Evidence of unity was publicised and exaggerated. It was said that between 850,000 and one million Israelis – a large part of the population – had walked past Rabin's coffin as it lay in front of the Knesset, though witnesses put the real number at well under 100,000.

Binyamin Netanyahu, leader of the right-wing Likud party, even described it as natural and understandable that Yasser Arafat should make his first known visit to Tel Aviv to offer condolences to Mrs Rabin.

The amiability did not last. Soon after the murder, mainstream rabbis happily shared platforms with those suspected of approving the assassination. Rabbinical denunciations of the murder were less than

wholehearted. Many Labour party supporters believed that the settlers on the West Bank, the religious right and opposition to the Oslo accords were permanently discredited. This is probably wishful thinking, or at least exaggerated. Polls show that few Israelis have changed their political opinions and the Labour party will be pushed to win a majority in the general election next year.

Yet the changes in Israeli political culture are fundamental. Previously, the agenda of Israeli society was set by perception of an external threat, real or exaggerated. A survey of the Israeli press since the foundation of the state shows that more than 80 per cent of the headlines have dealt with national security issues. It is a view of Israel to which the leaders of Shin Bet and Mr Rabin's personal bodyguards appear to have subscribed. The solitary waiting figure of Yigal Amir, an Israeli and a Jew, simply could not be an assassin.

The assassination also had a direct political impact. It occurred on the eve of the Israeli pull-out from the main towns of the West Bank. In other circumstances, this would have led to mass demonstrations by the settlers and the religious right. They would have been supported by Likud under Netanyahu, claiming a sell-out by Rabin and Shimon Peres, the foreign minister.

Instead, Israeli forces slid out of their headquarters in Palestinian towns such as Jenin and Nablus with scarcely a murmur of protest in Israel. Opponents of withdrawal could do nothing.

The patriotic card, exploited by Netanyahu or anyone else, may not be played as successfully in Israel in future as it has in the past. Cynics argue that the exaggerated emotion immediately after Rabin died has turned a tragedy into kitsch. But the images of the murdered man, his face permanently etched into the minds of many Israelis, that the threat from within is as dangerous as that from outside.

Brent Spar: how we all lost

Nicholas Schoon spent three days on the oil rig with Greenpeace protesters. He left convinced they were in the wrong. He was right

Shell and Greenpeace's war over the Brent Spar was thrilling, titanic and very frustrating. Yet in the end, the public were probably more misled than enlightened.

Its significance lay in the fact that it had little to do with party politics and international diplomacy and everything to do with late 20th-century forces: global electronic media, international branding and single-issue campaigning. In Brent Spar's case, they were forces of confusion.

The ferocity of what was essentially a public relations war, the images of the corroded Spar and the courage of the Greenpeace "action teams" made a huge, unmissable story. But most coverage failed to examine or explain the heart of the matter.

It began with Shell persuading the British government that dumping the Brent Spar 7,000ft down in the Atlantic was the "best practicable environmental option". This piece of jargon, BPEO, means the disposal option which minimises damage to the environment, threats to workers' health and safety and disposal costs. The concept captures the most important factors and Shell was right – deep-sea dumping was the BPEO for the Spar, an oil tank containing a few dozen tonnes of oil, a few kilos of toxic heavy metals and a little low-level radiation.

Disposing of it on land was difficult, with much higher costs and extra risks of the structure breaking up and releasing contaminants in inshore waters. Neither Greenpeace nor anyone else could demonstrate that deep-ocean disposal of the Spar posed a significant threat to the marine environment.

Greenpeace said sea disposal set a bad precedent. If the Government allowed a rich oil company to dump the Spar at sea, how could the public be expected to take environmental protection seriously? Shell had to abandon sea dumping after a consumer boycott in Germany.

It is a superficially attractive but bad argument which treats the public like children. Decisions on waste disposal and recycling ought to balance economic and environmental protection. Greenpeace got away with sloppy thinking by portraying Shell as the ugly face of big business – greedy, uncaring, and so wealthy that it should not have to worry about money.

Yet Greenpeace found itself victimised afterwards; it owned up to grossly overestimating the amount of crude oil inside the Spar. It had said there could be 5,500 tonnes, while Shell owned up to 33 tonnes. Independent analysis showed the oil company was nearly right. Across Europe, most media reported the Greenpeace confession in a way which suggested its entire Spar campaign had been a fraud, which was unfair.

The Spar, now in a Norwegian fjord, will very likely be disposed of onshore by 1998. The idea that the campaign marked some great breakthrough for environmental politics received a grave setback later in the year in Mururoa Atoll, when peace failed to halt French nuclear explosions, and in Oppland where Shell's extraction of oil and gas has gone unchecked.

So at the end of a year in which arguably green protest in Europe claimed its most significant and powerful scalp, one was left asking what has changed and what has been learnt.

Mary Dejevsky

Mladic, I presume

Standing in Bijeljina's central square on the eve of the holiest day in the Serbian Orthodox calendar, there was nothing in General Ratko Mladic's manner to indicate that he was soon to direct the murder of thousands of men.

It was 27 June, the night before the feast of the 4th-century martyr Saint Vitus, and exactly two weeks to the day before Bosnian Serb forces crushed the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica and began to execute its male population.

Mladic, the Bosnian Serb military commander, was in Bijeljina to celebrate the feast. I was there hoping to interview him. It was a crucial moment in the Bosnian conflict, full of expectations and portents.

Bosnia's mainly Muslim government had just failed to break the siege of Sarajevo with 15,000 men, a force that no one had believed it could muster so easily. The Serbs had managed to push back the Muslims, in some areas only just. Next time it might not be so easy.

A month before, the Serbs had taken hundreds of UN troops hostage, chaining some to ammunition dumps to ward off new Nato air raids. The gambit forced a stand-off, not just with Nato and the UN but with the Serbs' backers in Belgrade, who sent their chief secret policeman to get Mladic to back down. All this had taken its toll, and the morale of the Bosnian Serb army was said to be rock bottom.

I thought the best way to gauge the future was to talk to the man responsible for setting the rhythm of the war. Normally he was unavailable as he was on the frontline. Only on occasions such as St Vitus Day did he come out to play. He was leaving a celebration of Serbian

Would you shake hands with the Serb general wanted for war crimes? Robert Block did

culture when my chance came. "General, this is Robert Block, the British journalist who named you 'Man of the Year'." With these words Lieutenant Colonel Milan Maticovic, the Bosnian Serb army spokesman, introduced me to the warrior prince of the former Yugoslavia and the man suspected of being one of this century's most notorious war criminals.

A smile broke across the general's broad face and he took my hand in a grip as firm as his nationalist convictions. "I am honoured to meet you," he said, "but I am afraid you sent this accolade to the wrong address."

Never had the general spoken truer words. This "honour" he thought I had bestowed was not meant as a compliment. In an article for the *Independent on Sunday* I had stated that Ratko Mladic was a contender for the 1994 title not because of his virtues, but because of his ruthlessness and his horrifying success in calling the bluff of Nato's rubber-stamped leaders.

I remember thinking how someone famous once warned against using irony with politicians: it will only anger them – or be lost on them altogether. I was relieved Mladic fell into the latter category.

If I were expecting to see any sign of desperation in the man the Serbs call a living legend, I was mistaken. He stood before

me, oozing confidence, power and, dare I say it, charm.

In photographs and from afar, wearing his Napoleon-style cap and dress uniform, Mladic looked huge. But close up, he was of average height and build. Only his face was big, with blow-torch blue eyes. And when he spoke to me that night it was of peace, not war. "It's high time the weapons in this part of the world, and all over the world, were silenced. If it were in my power, I wouldn't let the word 'war' be uttered in any language."

For all his pretences at being a peacemaker, his plans were already well advanced to wipe out Srebrenica and the other Muslim enclaves. The only indication that something was afoot came in a speech he made just before I saw him: "The upcoming period ... can be decisive for the outcome of the war."

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Strikes and solidarity teach the French élite a lesson

The "unique selling point" that brought Jacques Chirac to the French presidency on 7 May was his promise to beat the country's social divisions. Little can he have suspected that this appealing slogan would, by the year's end, have been turned on its head, threatening to isolate the president and his men on the wrong side of the divide.

When Chirac was campaigning, what he had in mind was the glaring discrepancy between the haves and have-nots in Nineties France; the extent to which one section of the population seemed to be excluded from the mainstream of French life: the young unemployed, the second-generation immigrants on the housing estates, the urban poor. The perception that there were two distinct French populations worried the voters: it allowed Mr Chirac to hijack the traditional agenda of the left while presenting himself as the candidate of change, and gave him victory.

It was the wave of day-long strikes that preceded the election, however, that gave a foretaste of what was to come. "The one good thing about strikes," people said in anticipation, "is that the French become very *solidaire*." Indeed they do.

It took the all-out strike by the national railways and Paris local transport in November and December, coupled with intermittent strikes by the public utilities, to show the degree of that *solidarité*. For what began as a series of separate protests, linked by a very hazy idea about the government's proposed welfare reforms, and general public-sector fury about

an imminent pay freeze, escalated rapidly into a grass-roots political protest in which the theme of us and them – "we the people" and "they the rulers" – was dangerously to the fore.

The scale of the protest was all the more unexpected because the government – in the person of the prime minister, Alain Juppé – had made what he considered were great efforts to "consult" before he announced his reforms. The people, however, thought differently.

The idea that France, with its renowned high-speed trains, should be entirely without a national rail service for more than three weeks, and that a city the size of Paris (3.5 million people), should be without all its public transport for the same time, would have been inconceivable before it happened. When it did, though, people rallied round and refused to blame the strikers whose action was making life so inconvenient.

An early attempt by Juppé's



Feel-good despite the strike

Gaullist RPR party to organise an anti-strike movement became such a political embarrassment that the party had to disown it. On the streets, meanwhile, Parisians at least were having something akin to a party. Giving lifts and hitchhiking became a way of life to the point where even grandmothers thought nothing of standing by the side of the road holding up a destination sign. Drivers stopped as a matter of course. If you had thoughts of sitting quietly in a café reading the paper, you were disappointed. Communication became the order of the day, with everyone talking to everyone else, complete strangers included.

People walked vast distances to work – and got lost because they were unused to navigating the capital. A river bus proved such a success that it may survive beyond the strike. Walking, cycling, roller-blading – any method of getting to work was good.

An early flush of indignation by small shopkeepers was lost in the co-operative effort. The rush hour became rush hours to the point where the only times to drive in and out of Paris were at dead of night or between 11am and 3pm. The highway code was a dead letter and parking restrictions were lifted; but drivers also became strangely patient.

Remarkably, until the strike was almost over, there was virtually no evidence of ill-feeling between strikers and non-strikers. The few buses that plied their routes were not picketed or stoned. Railwaymen who turned up for work as usual – but could not take the trains out – joined

striking colleagues for a Christmas dinner before the return to work. Striking or not was treated as a personal decision.

The result was a month of national cohesion in which a large majority of the French population overcame Chirac's "social fractures", to band together, but against the government and especially against Juppé. With his cool manner and his insistence that people had only to understand his logic to accept it, the prime minister seemed to many the quintessence of an increasingly unpopular élite: the intellectual business school graduate, incapable of communicating outside his charmed circle.

As the strike drew to its end, overtaken by a combination of government concessions, hardship among strikers and general fatigue, Juppé appeared on television looking haggard. He had held on to central elements of his welfare reform and he had held on to his job (just), but he looked a beaten and humbled man and he spoke of listening and of reconciliation.

Whether this was a change of image or substance mattered at that point less than the fact that such a change had been deemed necessary at all, and that a chink had been opened in the armour of the protected French élite.

The social fractures on which Chirac campaigned have not vanished; nor have they been healed. But they were briefly relegated to the sidelines as the French took a hard look at the people who govern them and decided to teach them a lesson.

Mary Dejevsky

A DELIVERY MAN



The MALT



The MACALLAN

EXCLUSIVELY, IS MATURED IN

SHERRY SEASONED OAK CASKS

TO IMBUE IT WITH THE UNIQUE

NOSE, COLOUR AND TASTE THAT

MAKES IT The MALT

السنة الأولى

A small wonder among the bungs

A little Brazilian's arrival lifted the slur of sleaze from British football, says Jim White

It was football's annus horribilis - 12 months of bungs and back-handers, head-butting and kung fu kicking, coke addiction and taxi demolition. Yet the year's most significant moment came one day at the end of October when, out of the tunnel of a stadium opened only weeks previously, trotted a 5ft 3in lad with a Stephen Hendry-sized skin problem, surrounded by minders, photographers and bemused policemen. The day Juninho, the small and perfectly talented Brazilian international, signed for Middlesbrough Football Club, the new era of English league football had finally begun.

Middlesbrough made quite a performance of the signing. Juninho played keepy-uppy on the pitch with his new manager, Bryan Robson; 3,000 fans filed into the main stand of the new Celtic Riverside Stadium (many wearing umbrellas); the world's press was invited along (and kept corralled in a pen a safe

distance from the main attraction). And the club was right to put on such a show; to snap up the world's best young player was a coup worth making a song and dance about.

Since the Premier League was formed in 1993, concentrating the new money coming into the game into its upper tiers, the leading clubs in England have increasingly been able to afford fancy foreign players. Journeyman foreigners, cloggers and leather-lunged trundlers from Scandinavia and Eastern Europe had been a staple for a number of years; they were useful players who came cheap. But the Premier League chairman has started to shop around, picking up some of the

sharper continental talents, such as Jürgen Klinsmann.

Klinsmann was a godsend for Alan Sugar, Tottenham's chairman. The fans knew him as a class act, and his public relations skills would help the chairman to win over those dismayed by the recent power struggle between Sugar and Terry Venables, the former manager. Klinsmann, too, was grateful for the opportunity. Jaded by his time in Italy, he was delighted to rehabilitate himself against less sophisticated defences in England. Besides, these Englishmen, who remembered him for his heroics in the World Cup of 1990 and 1994 rather than his barren years at Internazionale, were pre-

pared to bolster his pension fund enormously. So he came to England, spent a year filling his boots with goals and money, and went home to Germany happy.

Over the summer of 1995, the Klinsmann route was followed by two major Dutch stars - Ruud Gullit and Dennis Bergkamp. Neither was quite the player he had been and neither was in the first flush of youth, but both served an important purpose for their clubs: they would sell expensive season tickets by the truckload. And, as it happened, both (until recent injuries) have given accomplished performances.

Juninho is different. He is young, he is still learning his game and,

unlike Klinsmann, Gullit and Bergkamp, he is a stranger to Britain, its language and its ways. Generally, players of his ilk go to Italian league clubs, tempted there by lorryloads of lire. But Juninho chose England. Not only that, he signed for a club without an international reputation, only just promoted to the top division.

The story of how Bryan Robson came to circumvent precedent is as quaint as it is intriguing. He was alerted to the player long before anyone else in England by a Boro fan who, travelling in Brazil, happened to see him play and wrote to Robson to enthuse. Robson watched Juninho demolish England in a summer tour-

namment, and then flew to Sao Paulo to talk to him. So thrilled was the young Brazilian by the interest shown by such a renowned figure as Robson, the former Manchester United and England captain, that he decided to sign for him on the spot. No one else, he said, as he was interviewed poring over an atlas looking for the English town with the funny name. Had shown such interest.

It was not simply Robson's attentiveness. The money he supplied with him - supplied by Steve Gibson, Boro chairman and a man happy to use his personal fortune to help his club gate-crash the big time - matched anything that might have been offered by Milan or Juventus.

In the end, though, the package of transfer fee and salary that landed Juninho worked out at less than Manchester United forked out for Andy Cole. Few would argue over who got the better value.

It was typical of the recalcitrant insularity of some parts of the English footballing establishment that many predicted the slight youngster would not flower in Middlesbrough as he might have done in Italy. Too cold, too industrial, opposing defenders too hard was the consensus. As if it is warm in Turin in January, as if Sao Paulo is a bucolic paradise, as if Paulo Maldini is a sofie.

But as Juninho struts his stuff in front of full houses in the grand new stadiums of the Premiership, it should not be taken as a metaphor for the overall health of the professional game. In the lower leagues, clubs such as Brighton and Hull face extinction. In football, as in the boardroom, 1995 was the year the hard got happy.

As Rob's kick fell to earth, amateurism went with it. By Steven Bale

Drop goal gorgeous



England's Rob Andrew boots the Aussies - and the old rugby union - into touch

It is an irresistible temptation to identify the second or so it took Rob Andrew's drop goal to go from boot to posts and so beat Australia in Cape Town as a watershed for English rugby union just as much as England rugby.

As it turned out, the World Cup quarter-final on that exquisite day in June was the zenith of England's World Cup achievement, the subsequent defeats in the semi-final by New Zealand and the third-place match by France marking the end for the last remnants of the old guard who had seen England through their most prosperous era.

And with the change in the team came the change in the game. Seventy-eight days after England had beaten Australia, rugby union turned professional. How appropriate, we might now say with hindsight, that it was Andrew who saw out the old, for he personified the new. It was Andrew who was the hardest-nosed players' negotiator when the England squad were ringing in the professional age; he has become the highest-paid of the new professionals.

It is curious to recall that the same hard-nosed Andrew, supposedly receiving £150,000 a year as rugby development director of Newcastle United Sporting Club, has always been seen as the player whom any woman would like as her son-in-law.

He can be said to have symbolised the best of amateurism at a time when every other box-office sport had long since and unashamedly embraced professionalism. Approachability and affability are not universally endorsed as essentials for the professional sportsman and Andrew the amateur had both in abundance.

And he still has. Yet to hear him now is to appreciate how much he - or perhaps that should be rugby - has changed. Amateurism having departed with his famous drop goal, professionalism is suddenly England rugby's only salvation against the likes of South Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

"It is almost a cultural change we need in the northern hemisphere," he said. "It means being professional about winning from an early age. It's the only way the likes of Scotland, Ireland and England can live with the southern hemisphere. We have to make playing at a higher level and winning important."

These remarks, made in a television programme over the weekend that reviewed the 1995 World Cup, mark a cultural change in themselves. Andrew is in the marketplace to buy a team for Newcastle - no different in principle (only in the number of wickets on the contract) from Kevin Keegan, his Newcastle football counterpart.

Rugby union's problem used to be articulating the justification for its amateurism to a wider public used to professional sport. This was particularly so in England, where the extreme reluctance with which the governing body, the Rugby Football Union, greeted earlier liberalisations of the amateur code incensed their international players to the point of complete breakdown between administrators and those they administered.

Now full-blown professionalism has been indicated (as some at Twickenham see it) on the game, the RFU is struggling to come to terms with amateurs running a professional game. Why else would the RFU's full committee - the "57 old farts" of Will Carling's notorious jibe - resist the advice of its own commission on professionalism to give its executive a more business-like feel by calling it the board of management?

Andrew, retired from international rugby, is under no such constraints at Newcastle. He was appointed by Sir John Hall not to play a game but to do a job of work, which is what rugby at its most exalted levels has become in 1995. The old went out when Rob Andrew dropped for goal and the rugby world held its breath; now it's in with the new.

Monica's meltdown

John Roberts recounts the day when a fairy-tale comeback was cheated of a happy ending

Aesthetically speaking, the Open hears little or no comparison to Wimbledon. Flushing Meadows, New York, was once used for dumping and burning Brooklyn's rubbish - F Scott Fitzgerald called it "a valley of ashes" in *The Great Gatsby* - but the place atones by staging many of the most exciting tennis matches imaginable, despite weird scheduling.

Female players, while treated equally with men in terms of the tournament's prize money - \$575,000 went to each of this year's singles champions - seem almost to be regarded as an afterthought on the day of the final. Their lot, on what is known as "Super Saturday", is to be sandwiched between the two men's singles semi-finals to satisfy television's demands.

But no one doubted which match rated top billing on 9 September - Steffi Graf versus Monica Seles. The two greatest players of their generation, jointly ranked No 1 in the world, had played their way to the most eagerly awaited contest for years.

An American commentator said Seles and Graf had both been stabbed in the back: Seles, in reality, 29 months earlier, by a fanatical Graf fan who wanted to see the German restored to

No 1 in the world rankings. Graf, figuratively, by her father, manager Peter, who was in prison accused of evading millions of marks in tax on her earnings.

Graf had won six of the 10 major championships played in Seles's absence since the stabbing in Hamburg in 1993, each victory perceived by many to have been hollow. Through no fault of her own, Graf had come to be regarded as the dominating force in a diminished league in which other competitors prospered chiefly when she was unfit.

Seles, restored physically and mentally and granted a share of the No 1 ranking which had been hers at the time of the attack, had altered only slightly. Aged 19 when assaulted, she was, at 21, an inch and a half

taller - 5ft 11in. She had also gained a few pounds around the middle and had provoked a niggling knee injury trying to run them off.

Otherwise, she was as we remembered - the flurry of two-handed strokes, the screwing up of the nose in concentration, the grunting (perhaps not so loud or frequent as before, but given vent if the going got tough), and the giggling, which continued to punctuate interviews.

The credibility of women's tennis was at stake when Graf and Seles eventually made their way to the Stadium Court. The fact that Seles, although rusty, had won the 11 matches of her comeback without losing a set hardly reflected credit on her opponents. If Graf, her equal, also suffered humiliation, potential sponsors could have been lost to the sport.

However, all these misgivings were cast aside when the action began, 20,000 spectators thrilling to an oscillating contest. At the end, only one point separated the players. And it was in Graf's favour - at 7-6, 0-6, 6-3.

More than two years of pain and anguish seemed to evaporate as Graf and Seles embraced - a day of splendour in a valley of ashes.



Monica Seles: still grunting

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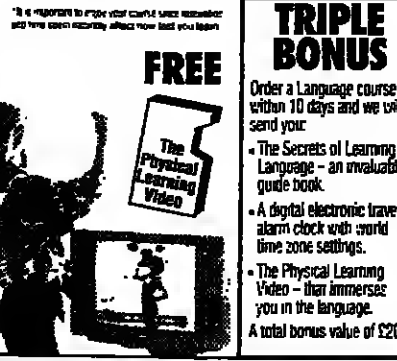


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Eleven good men and true

Robert Winder selects his fantasy World Cricket XI

Of course, there is no such thing as an ideal cricket team, because it depends what you want. In the heyday of the fast men, Clive Lloyd would probably have picked 11 express pace bowlers, while Geoff Boycott, in his fierce prime, might have plumped for 11 limpet-like opening bats. But most people like a bit of everything: the odd thunderclap of speed in the bowling, supported by plenty of guile, and a mixture of steadiness and virtuosity from the batsmen.

But for those who like their cricket acrimonious, the game might easily furnish 11 players guaranteed to run each other out. Lara and Richardson, who have given the world the spectacle of a West Indian captain and vice-captain barely on speaking terms, could open the batting. Salim Malik would have to drop down the order to support Shane Warne and Tim May, the Australians who have

accused him of attempted bribery. Jonathan Agnew might have to be recalled to open the bowling, with Philip DeFreitas, whose cricket bag he once, famously, chucked out of the pavilion window at Leicester; and it is hard to imagine a less chummy pair of back-up bowlers than Devon Malcolm and Ray Illingworth. Slugging it out in the middle order would be Ian Botham and Imran Khan, rivals for "best all-rounder" honours and opponents in an on-going libel action about racism. As it happens, this wouldn't be a bad side - but it might be the first time in history that a team has needed 11 dressing rooms.

It might be more fun to compile a team designed purely to twist the tongues of commenta-

tors. One of the more pleasant aspects of the summer was the way Colin Croft, the former West Indian fast bowler, insisted on referring to Atherton as Athurton and vice versa. These two would, as it happens, make a fine opening partnership. They could be followed by Waugh and Waugh, Richardson and Richardson, Rhodes, Rhodes, Benjamin, Benjamin and Kumble (with Kambli twelfth man).

A serious selection is altogether trickier: the great players of the present day never seem so grand as the faded performers of yesteryear. Still, not many people would argue with the front four batsmen: Atherton, Slater, Lara and Tendulkar, though there is a case, now that England's captain has proved

himself the master of the rear-guard action, for sticking him in at number 11, just in case. Nor are there many batsmen in the world who would fancy their chances against a bowling attack of Allan Donald, Waqar Younis, Curtly Ambrose, Shane Warne and Anil Kumble.

The wicketkeeper would be Ian Healy (if only because he has, as it were, been Warned), which leaves a single batting place up for grabs. It is a toss-up between "the nod" on the basis that he'd probably be captain.

Naturally, with all these maestros competing for the limelight, Mickey Stewart would have to be team manager. There'd be lots of work-outs in the gym, early nights and fines for unpunctuality. As all sports administrators know, the key thing with great players is to show 'em win a boss. If nothing else, that would take these so-called world-beaters down a peg.

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arrivals and departures

Who's out of the in-crowd?

IN THIS YEAR

Hugh Grant and Liz Hurley. A divine couple still, proving there is less to life than rehearsed diffidence (him) and minimal dressing (her). **Anthea Turner.** For smiling a lot. For being Anthea. **Prince William.** who escaped the hell of a dysfunctional family for the hell of a public school. **Imran Khan and Jemima Goldsmith.** The marriage everyone assumes won't last. But it will. She won't want to give up wearing those designer shalwar kameez. **Danielle Bonnywell.** babe **Pamela Anderson** and modest husband **Tommy Lee.** Their willingness to share every inch of their private life with the world has kept the *Daily Star* in business. **The Stones.** The Voodoo Lounge tour proved they ain't ready to fade away. **PR person Julia Carling.** who rode the storm of husband Will's gym sessions



with Princess Diana with such aplomb she became the patron saint of PR persons and landed her own TV series. **Bob Geldof.** who looked sorry for himself and still resolutely refuses to wash. **Brookside.** The soap had the nation agog when battered wife Mandy Jordache sought for justice after killing her husband and burying his body under the patio, and acquiesced over Beth Jordache's lesbian kisses. **Eric Cantona.** Elevated thanks to Nike to godlike status after his high-kicking performance against a Crystal Palace fan. **Michael Jackson.** who still has hit records and still appears to be married to Lisa-Marie. **Inside: Ronnie Knight.** one-time love of Barbara Windsor. After years delving extrajudicially on the Costa del Crime, he gave himself up and was surprised to be sent down for seven years. **Vanessa Mae.** who took off her clothes and learnt how to play the violin. **Loaded.** magazine of the leer - for appealing to the baser instincts of young men and making unpolitical correctness correct.

OUT THIS YEAR

Julie Goodyear. aka Bet Gilroy, the bochive temptress of the Rover's Return, who left *Coronation Street* for a life of panto and chat shows. **Anne Diamond and Nick Owen.** sofa, but no further. **Ian and Rachael Featherstone.** who sued the tour firm Cosmos after their honeymoon in St Lucia was wrecked by a hurricane. They claimed it upset them so much they couldn't make love. **Kenny Everett.** who died from Aids in an £8,000 bed bought for the occasion from Harrods. **Charlie Blair's clothes.** **Gillian Telford.** of *EastEnders*, for writing the dullest autobiography of all time in an attempt to explain what pancreatitis really is. **Two-time Ken Dune.** When he died his mistress and widow went to court to see who could be buried alongside him. The mistress won. **Gazza.** Lost his touch on the field and his long-suffering girlfriend, Sheryl, as well. **Stephen Fry** walked out on *Cellmates*, resurfaced on the Internet, sported a succession of bad hair-dos. **The Beatles.** Imagine what Lennon would have made of all the reshaped mediocrity. **Robbie Williams.** sacked from Take That. He immediately guaranteed the end of his 15 minutes by posing in a bikini bottom. **Paula Yates** who left the *Big Breakfast* and Bob Geldof for INXS singer Michael Hutchence, who she boasted was God's gift to women. **More off than out: Emma Thompson and Kenneth Branagh.** She then showed more sensibility than sense by romancing *Sense and Sensibility* co-star Greg Wise. **More over and out than out: Urtika Jonsson.** who tossed her blonde mane and confessed to two-timing her



husband with Gladiator Hunter. The couple had been together long enough to have a baby after she had confessed about another affair with a cameraman. **Jill Morrell and John McCarthy.** The romance that everyone wanted to work didn't. In, out, swing it all about: **Princess Diana.**

RICHARD HOLLEGE



Period pin-up: Mr Darcy in the BBC's 'Pride and Prejudice', played by Colin Firth. The video sold 12,000 copies within two hours of release BBC

Our knight in icy armour

Why did the emotionally repressed Mr Darcy send the nation's women into a swoon? **Decca Aitkenhead** on the shortcomings of the man of the year

Few could have predicted that this year's man of the moment, the sex symbol to outline all Hollywood's hunkiest, would be a character some 200 years old. Mr Darcy, Austenian hero of *Pride and Prejudice*, glowered his way effortlessly into the place in our hearts previously occupied by Hugh Grant, Keanu Reeves and, for some of the young, the entire cast of *Take That*. It was an astonishing rise to fame for Colin Firth (the hitherto unremarkable jobbing luvvie who played Darcy), as he himself reluctantly admits. Within two episodes, he had shot to heights of amorous adulation of which most period drama actors could but dream. The autumn series drew audiences of more than 10 million; the video sold in excess of 70,000 copies (the first run, of 12,000, sold out within two hours); the *Times* was congratulated on its almost daily publication of Firth's picture by a grateful

female readership. It was, concluded the BBC, all due to "the Darcy phenomenon". The ladies of Fleet Street were, to a woman, won over. "If the BBC were to run off a poster of Colin Firth in his wet T-shirt, it would probably sell enough to have the licence fee - that tumbled brown hair and those deep-set eyes..." It was the facial hair as well, I think. He always had a bit of very manly latent stubble. "And she seemed to speak for the nation's women, or her mother and sister at least. So, an arrogant, unkempt, icy bastard, incapable of indicating that he harbours hidden but warmer waters, saved only by the love of a good woman - is this what the Nineties female goes for? If this is the contemporary (thinking woman's) beefcake, then what we are seeing is an epidemic of mad cows. Darcy is the height of unconstructed male inadequacy. Trapped within a peculiarly masculine vanity, he behaves disgracefully, yet he attracts and in-

trigues women who should know better. "The only reason they lost the plot so shamelessly over him," according to one of the few women unmoved by Darcy's dubious charms, "was because he was supposedly 'highbrow'." It was perfectly OK for intelligent women to relapse into idiocy over someone created by Jane Austen - they could never have done it over some bloke invented by Hollywood. Darcy does indeed prove himself ultimately worthy of Miss Bennett's affections. But what is so distressing is that it was his preceding pride and posturing that captivated the viewers. Women idolised Darcy not in spite of his "total inability to express his feelings", but because of it. If the British women's sex symbol of 1995 was two centuries out of date, so, too, it seems, were their demands for a half-decent man.

Four days later, on 2 March, they landed in Frankfurt. For the next eight months Lisa travelled to Germany every week to spend an hour with her husband in Frankfurt prison, while the lawyers argued about whether he should be tried in England or Singapore. By July, Lisa had thrown herself into the fray, pleading with the media to help her husband fight extradition to Malaysia. Singapore won. On 22 November she accompanied Nick as he was flown back to stand trial. He pleaded guilty and on 2 December was sentenced to six and a half years. Privately, he had hoped for four. Lisa will spend those years doing what she has done for most of her married life: waiting for her husband to come home. In 1995 Lisa's world collapsed around her. In January she was living in Singapore in some style, waiting only for Nick's big bonus before they could go home. Now she is home all right, but living with her parents in the same Kent village from which she was married less than four years ago. She works part-time in a local tea-room, wearing an old-fashioned black and white waitress' uniform and serving home-made cakes and scones. How does she feel, looking back? "Not bitter, but disappointed and numb. Nick was only doing his job as best he could. I've had untold letters of support and they all think Nick's been scapegoated. I feel that, too. If somebody, somewhere in Barings had questioned what he was doing, this would never have happened." She may be a sadder and a wiser woman, but she remains a devoted and loyal wife.

A lousy year for Lisa Leeson

She never wanted to be anything except Nick Leeson's wife. She is not materialistic and despite the rumours, her husband only earned £52,000 a year - not a lot by top City standards. She wished he could spend more time at home with her and, above all, she longed for a baby. Unfortunately, Nick Leeson had greater ambitions.

When they celebrated the new year with friends in Singapore, Nick was one of Barings' most dazzling young money-spinners, gambling on Japanese futures on the Nikkei-225 index. The bank gave him a pretty free hand; it just sat back and let him make millions. He was promised a £450,000 bonus in March and told Lisa they would hang on long enough to collect that, then go back to England, buy a nice house with a big garden and start a family. He may even have believed it; certainly Lisa did.

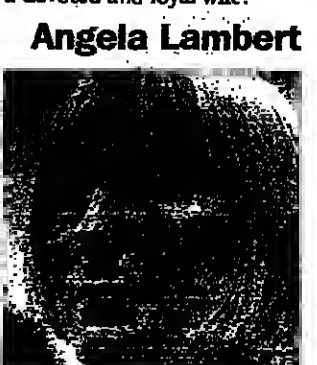
In the early weeks of 1995 she knew he was under a lot of stress. He could not sleep at night; he never relaxed. She did not know the stress was because Nick had gambled more than £600m of the bank's money, and it looked as though he was on a losing streak. By the end of February catastrophe could no longer be avoided. Nick resigned from Barings and took his wife away for the weekend - anywhere, wherever the next flight was going to - to explain himself before going back to face the music. As they flew out of Singapore the world's press, and his former employers, were already searching for them.

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Angela Lambert



Lisa Leeson: still loyal

Barrymore shows honesty pays

The funny man's coming out seemed only to enhance his popularity, says **John Lyttle**

The rumours had been circulating since 1985, the year Michael Barrymore became the star in ITV's light entertainment firmament as the hyperactive host of *Strike It Lucky*. There had been ominous rumblings early in 1995 - "Barrymore falls off the wagon", "Drag queen talks of his nights out with Barrymore", "Marriage of funny man is believed to be in crisis". But it was not until August that the Sunday tabloids felt the time was right to expose Britain's most popular television performer as a "closet case" - a tortured gay supposedly sheltering behind his wife and manager, Cheryl, while indulging in drink, drugs and illicit sexual liaisons.

As it turned out, the time was not right. The viewers who made the superstar refused to break him. But when the predictably lurid headlines began, his continued survival as a stellar presence looked doubtful. "Girls claim to have seen comedian kissing man in gay club" was bad, but not as damaging as "Barrymore makes drunken pass at Bobby Davro". However, that seemed tame in comparison with "John Davis reveals Michael Barrymore's nights of gay love". John Davis being the funny man's former personal assistant and claimed David Leaver. Davis stated that he was spilling the beans not to harm Barrymore, but to save him: "Michael must face up to the truth of who and what he is. He is a very sick man who is denying his real sexual feelings."

Barrymore read the papers and flew back to Britain from Cannes, minus Cheryl, to "weather the storm", as one observer breathlessly put it. Actually, it was not so much storm as soap opera. Right down to Barrymore turning up in Croydon the next day to begin shooting his new series, *My Kind of People*, and his wife's unexpected appearance being rewarded with a photographic kiss. If the intention was to calm rampant "is he's not the" speculation, it accomplished the opposite. Public opinion further divided: some wanted him to "come out", some could not comprehend the fuss, some did not care, and some simply could not believe their hero was homosexual. As one punter comforted Cheryl, "We know it isn't so."

Barrymore knew better. By 19 August, so did everyone else. Invited on to the stage of the White Swan pub in London and asked if the drag queen comedian if he finally decided to "tell the world", Barrymore answered "Yes... yes, I am, tore off his wedding ring and shouted, "Fuck it." The media feeding frenzy, redoubled especially when Barrymore confirmed his coming out ("I saved my life") on a gay radio programme. The burning topic - could Barrymore's career go on? - leapt from the news, fea-

tures and comment pages, as pundits weighed in with their opinions. The *Daily Mirror* praised his honesty - "It took a lot of courage for troubled Michael Barrymore to admit he's gay" - while *Today* peddled cynicism: "It is hard to shake the feeling that it was all an act."

What was now becoming clear was the fans' refusal to find either the star's sexual orientation, or the muck-raking exposure of it, a reason to end their allegiance to him. There were attempts to whip up indignation on behalf of Cheryl, the "betrayed party". According to the *People*, "Michael Barrymore has shown no courage whatsoever. He has been dragged, kicking and screaming all the way out of that closet." These fell on deaf ears, though arguably the public had as much right to feel betrayed as any spouse. After all, Barrymore had sold himself as a family man trying his best; his constituency empathised with his terrible childhood, his struggles with booze and dope, his anguish over Cheryl's miscarriages.

Yet it was this pall of tragedy and his own caring, compas-

sionate on-screen persona that probably saved his bacon. Barrymore Goes Gay appeared to be yet another episode in a weepie that Britain did not want to end - and it, at last, provided an explanation for his earlier self-destructive behaviour. When 29 August rolled around and he swept the National TV Awards, triumphing in all his nominated categories (best presenter, best quiz and - the big one - best family programme) it was, to every newspaper's bitter disappointment, all over. Barrymore had come through the "scandal" not only unscathed, but enhanced - final proof, if any was needed, that there's nowt so queer as folk. David Ashby, please copy.

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HOMES AND INTERIORS

Boas
2 Drury Way, North Circular Road, London NW10 (0181-208 5600) and at branches in Croydon, Birmingham, Gateshead, Leeds and Warrington. To 14 January. Up to 50 per cent savings throughout the store, including black leather three-seat sofa from £335 to £249.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Body Shop
First nationwide sale. Customer services (01903 731500). To 13 January. Products range from Seaweed & Birch shampoo (reduced from £1.25 to 60p) to Mamaloto Baby Bottom (reduced from £2 to £1) for those who want a cheap cure for sore bottoms.

SCOTLAND

DEPARTMENT STORES

Debenhams
(Scottish branches) General customer information 0171-408 3333.

House of Fraser
(Scottish branches) Aberdeen (01224 592341), Edinburgh (0131-225 2472), Glasgow (0141-221 5880). To last week of January.

CLOTHES

Laura Ashley
(Scottish branches) Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth. Customer services: (01686 622333). Between 20-50 per cent off selected items.

Racing Green

16 Buchanan Street, Glasgow (0141-226 4114). A sale catalogue can be obtained from 27 December on 0345 331177. Reductions on selected men's and women's classic items of 30-60 per cent.

NOW RUNNING

CLOTHES

Christian Lacroix
8a Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-235 2400) and 29 Old Bond Street, London W1 (0171-409 1994). To middle/end January. Discounts of 30 per cent.

Comme des Garçons
59 Brook Street, London W1 (0171-493 1258). To mid-January. Reductions of up to 40 per cent off all remaining men's and women's collections including Robes de Chambre, Comme des Garçons Tricot and Junya Watanabe.

French Connection
99 Long Acre, London WC2 and branches around the country. General inquiries (0171-580 2507). 30-50 per cent off selected stock.

Hobbs
Unit 17, The Piazza, Covent Garden, London WC2 (0171-836 9168) and branches nationwide. General customer information 0171-586 5550. Buy your party gear at prices discounted by up to 50 per cent. Strappy stilettos are reduced from £59.99 to £29.99, ballerina shoes from £28.99 to £19.99, satin cross-over dress from £64.99 to £32.99, bouclé flared dress from £49.99 to £29.99 and leopard skirt down from £49.99 to £29.99.

Shop
Basement, 4 Brewer Street, London W1 (0171-437 1259). To end of January. Thirty to 50 per cent off Hysteria Glamour (the Japanese answer to 'really cool' T-shirts), Jody Blame and Gimme 5.

SHOES

Ravel
Only at 184-188 Oxford Street, London W1. Sale starts at other branches this weekend. Mail order and inquiries on 0171-631 0224. Up to 35 per cent off this season's boots, bags and stiletto-heeled shoes.

HOMES AND INTERIORS

Rhodes Design
65 Cross Street, London N1 (0171-354 9933). Ten per cent



of all ranges of mid kitchen furniture, 60cm wall cupboard reduced from £195 to £175.50.

MISCELLANEOUS

Olympus
301 Oxford Street, London W1 (0171-409 2619) and at stores nationwide. Discounted goods include the Kastle bike Degree 3.5 - was £299.99, now £240. Nike ladies' air total body trainers are down from £59.99 to £44.99.

SALES TO COME

DEPARTMENT STORES

Debenhams
Starts 27 December at branches throughout England and Wales. 334-348 Oxford Street, London W1 (0171-580 3000). General customer information, 0171-408 3333.

Farwick
Starts 27 December at 63 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-629 9161) and stores in Brent Cross, Windsor, Leicester, York, Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells. Sale at the large Newcastle branch starts 28 December. At Bond Street, Mondri collections will be reduced by 30-50 per cent; Penn Wright & Manson, Betty Barclay collections by up to 50 per cent, and 30 per cent off Weekend collections. Reductions at Brent Cross include up to 50 per cent off French Connection, Jacques Vert and Bianca; 50 per cent off leather handbags and selected jewellery by Monet, Ciro and Napier.

Fortnum & Mason
Sale starts 28 December at 181 Piccadilly, London W1 (0171-734 8040).

Harrods
Smash-and-grab of the year starts 3 January at Knightsbridge, London SW1 (0171-730 1234). Reductions of up to half price are offered throughout the store. Account customers receive an additional 10 per cent off their shopping on day one of the sale.

Harvey Nichols
Starts 27 December at 109-125 Knightsbridge, London SW1 (0171-235 3000). The sale is expected to last around three weeks. Account customers get an additional 10 per cent off the sale price for the first four days. Specific bargains are a secret, but expect reductions to be up to 50 per cent off selected items throughout the store.

House of Fraser
Starts 27 December in England and Wales. For store sites, ring 0171-963 2236. Bargains in the

cookshop include 40 per cent off Le Creuset cast iron cookware in American green and burgundy and 50 per cent off Judge satin stainless steel cookware. Over at the homewares department, Drifter goose-down duvet covers (9 tog for spring, autumn and 4.5 tog for summer) are half the recommended retail price at £129. Also half price is Romanticism embellished bed linen in cream and white, reduced from £70 to £35.

John Lewis Partnership
Clearance sale starts 28 December at 278-306 Oxford Street, London W1 (0171-629 7711) at the following branches - Peter Jones, Sloane Square, John Lewis, Brent Cross, Balmbridge, Newcastle, John Lewis, Cheadle, John Lewis, High Wycombe, John Lewis, Aberdeen and John Lewis, Edinburgh. The sale starts 29 January at all other branches including Bonds, Norwich, Cole Brothers, Sheffield, John Lewis, Bristol. Savings around the store of up to 50 per cent. Many bargains in furnishing fabrics, including John Lewis's own brand Jonelle, and the china department. Reductions on Royal Doulton, Royal Albert, Portmeirion and Spode 'Blue' Italian ranges.

Liberty
Starts 27 December at Regent Street, London W1 (0171-734 1234) and branches nationwide. Join the hordes sniffing out fabric bargains such as printed Armani silk down from £89.95 to £25. Liberty printed silk from £14.95 to £10 and Liberty Versus wool from £22 to £15. Georgia von Stedorf velvet scarves are down from £95 to £65. English Eccentrics velvet devore scarves from £159 to £109. Liberty print watches with plain faces are reduced from £29.95 to £14.95 and Jean Paul Gaultier jewellery is half price. Pewter-framed mirrors are down from £59 to £29.

Marks & Spencer
End-of-season clearance will start 27 December at branches nationwide. Customer inquiries (0171-935 4422).

Selfridges
Starts 27 December at Oxford Street, London W1 (0171-629 1234). Armchair browsers can check out sale bargains in Selfridges Selection mail order catalogue, available now (0800 101101). The first week is Selfridges' busiest of the year. If you choose to join the 85,000 one through the doors on the first day, expect to find discounts from designer labels, furniture and china to carpets. Ladieswear discounts include Max Mara suits from £305 to £152, Betty Jackson jackets from £315 to £157 and Moschino T-shirts down from £49 to £34. Fifty per cent off handbags by DKNY, Fendi and Osprey. Menswear discounts include up to 50 per cent off Hugo Boss, Nicole Farhi and YSL. CK by Calvin Klein. Thirty per cent off Paul Smith, Giorgio Armani coats and Polo Ralph Lauren.

CLOTHES

Amanda Wakeley
Starts 5 January for about two weeks at 80 Fulham Road, London SW3 (0171-584 4009). Reductions will be 40-80 per cent off, including samples.

Agassentum
From 27 December at 100 Regent Street, London W1 (0171-734 6090). Reductions of 50-75 per cent on selected items.

Anstie Reed
Starts 27 December at Regent Street, London W1 (0171-734 6789) and nationwide. Account customers can take advantage of an extra 5 per cent discount on sale prices on the first three days. Selected merchandise discounted by up to 50 per cent including men's wool coats reduced from £279 to £139, wool jackets from £179 to £129. Women's winter coats down from £279 to £139.

Brora
From 5 January to 27 January. At 344 King's Road, London W3 (0171-352 3697). Good discounts on cashmere and tweed. For example, chunky cable cashmere knits down from £225 to £180, cashmere skinny ribs from £150 to £120, tweed country coats from £195 to £145.

Browns
Starts 4 January at 23-27 South Molton Street (0171-491 7833). Donna Karan dark camel one-button fitted jacket reduced from £1,180 to £600, matching skirt from £425 to £230. Menswear reductions include Browns Own Label suit £570, reduced to £400.

Chanel
Starts 6 January at 26 Old Bond Street, London W1 (0171-493 5040); 31 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-235 6631). Reductions on ready-to-wear collections and shoes of about 30 per cent.

Herbert Johnson
Starts 4 January at 30 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-408 1174). Reductions of 50 per cent on couture hats, casual hats 25 per cent off and accessories 30 per cent off. Pull-on felt hat down from £105 to £79. Men's hats reduced by up to 60 per cent, a felt trilby is down from £95 to £60.

Joseph
Starts 27 December 77 Fulham Road, London SW3 (0171-823 9500). Reductions from 30 per cent off.

Kingshill
This mail order sale starts 1 January. Call 01494 890555. British Designer Collections catalogue £7.50. Diffusion catalogue, £3.50. Phones are staffed from 9am to 7pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 6pm Saturday, Sundays 7 and 14 Jan 9.30-4.30pm. Sale of designer fashions by mail order means you don't need to leave your armchair to hunt bargains. Half price on Paul Costelloe, Nicole Farhi, Jasper Conran, Jaeger London and Amanda Wakeley.

Laura Ashley
Begins 27 December at branches nationwide. Inquiry number 01686 622116. Between 20 and 50 per cent off selected items.

Racing Green
Starts 27 December at 193 Regent Street, London W1 (0171-437 4300), 33 King Street, Manchester (0161-635 2022), Unit F1, Bental Centre, Kingston-upon-Thames. Sur-

vey (0181-546 2224). A sale catalogue can be obtained from 27 December on 0345 331177. Reductions on selected men's and women's classic items of 30-60 per cent. Men's corduroy trousers from £39 to £25 (PW605), ladies' wool cashmere backing jacket down from £115 to £50.

The Scotch House
Starts 27 December at 2 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, London SW1, 84-86 Regent Street, London W1, and 64 Buchanan Street, Glasgow. Reductions of 30-40 per cent on good quality cashmere and wool jumpers, for example a gold buttoned cashmere cardigan reduced from £235 to £169. Inquiries on 0171-581 2151.

Space NK
Starts 28 December at 11am, 41 Thomas Neal's, Earlsam Street, London WC2 (0171-373 7030). Between 30 and 40 per cent off designer labels and accessories including Clements Ribeiro, Future Ozbek, Alberto Biani, Soap Studio, Liza Bruce and Fenn Wright & Manson.

Warehouse
Starts 27 December at 19-21 Argyll Street, London W1 (0171-437 7101) and branches nationwide.

Wealth of Nations
From 31 January while stocks last. Up to 60 per cent off discontinued stock, for example Irish cork workshirts in five colours reduced from £38 to £20. Mail order from Wealth of Nations, Unit 28, The Talina Centre, Bagleys Lane, London SW6 2BW (0171-371 5333).

SHOES

Church's
Starts 27 December at branches throughout the country. Central inquiry number is 01323 649408. Some styles reduced by more than 50 per cent. Church Bellini men's shoes down from £199 to £99, ladies' lily-style high-heeled boot reduced from £120 to £60.

Dr Martens
Starts 4 January (midday) at 1-4 King Street, Covent Garden, London WC2 (0171-497 1460). Discounts of 25 per cent will be available on selected lines of footwear, clothing and accessories, with possibility of further reductions as the sale progresses.

Jones Bootmakers
Sale starts 27 December at branches throughout the country. Inquiry number is 01323-649408.

Pied à terre
Starts 27 December at 32 Neal Street, London WC2 (0171 240 8148) and branches nationwide. Reductions include court shoes reduced from £79 to £40, pumps £65 to £30 and long boots from £95 to £50.

Ravel
Starts 27 December at branches nationwide - already running at 184-188 Oxford Street, London W1. Mail order and inquiries on 0171-631 0224. Up to 33 per cent off this season's boots, bags and stiletto-heeled shoes.

Red or Dead
Starts 27 December at 1 & 23 Thomas Neal's, Earlsam

Street, London WC2 (0171 240 5576) and branches nationwide. General inquiries (0171-937 3137). Selected stock reduced by 50 per cent. Sixties-style knee-length nylon boots in gold, black or rust reduced from £120 to £60.

Small and Tall Shoe Shop
Sale of women's shoes in large or small sizes. Sale for large sizes (8 1/2-11 1/2) runs from 27 Dec to 6 Jan. Small sizes (12 1/2-21 1/2) will be reduced from 10 January to 20 January. 71 York Street, London W1 (0171-723 5321). All current stock will be reduced.

HOMES & INTERIORS

The Conran Shop
Starts 6 January until 21 January at 81 Fulham Road, London SW3 (0171-589 7401). The Conran Shop is also holding a two-day warehouse furniture sale 6 January (10am-6.30pm) and 7 January (10am-4pm); discounts of half price are promised along with even lower-priced bargains. There will be courtesy buses running between the shop and the warehouse (Unit 16, Merton Park Estate, Lee Road, London SW16).

Crucial Trading
Sale starts 28 December, ends 28 February. Fifty per cent reduction on certain floor coverings, including Old School Group Coir (now £6.38 per square metre) and Candy Stripe Liqueur Sisal (now £11.15 per square metre). Twenty five per cent off seagrass floorings and a 20 per cent reduction on everything else. Crucial Trading, 77 Westbourne Park Road, London W2 (0171-221 9000) and 4 St Barnabas Street, Piccadilly Green, London SW1 (0171-221 9000).

Designers Guild
Starts 6 January until 20 January at 267 Kings Road, London SW3 (0171-351 5775). There will also be a warehouse sale on 13-21 Jan at 6 Relay Road, Ariel Way, off Wood Lane, London W12. Reductions on upholstery, bedlinen, cushions, rugs and tableware. Fabric and wallpaper only at the warehouse sale.

The General Trading Company
Starts 6 January until 27 January at 144 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-730 0411) and 27 December at 10 Argyll Street, Bath (01225-461507) and 2-4 Dyer Street, Cirencester (01285-652314). Save up to 30 per cent on this clear-out. Selected cushions reduced from £52.10 to £36.47, quilted cotton bedspreads from £180 to £135 and Kelim stools from £640 to £500.

Heal's
Starts 27 December at 196 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (0171-636 1666), 234 King's Road and Tinsgate, Guildford. Look for greatly reduced one-off pieces of furniture that are either shop-soiled, damaged or buyers' samples, along with little luxuries like a Heal's handmade Avon bed (5ft) reduced from £2,495 to £1,870.

Jerry's Home Store
At 163 Fulham Road, SW3; Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, SW1; The Bental Centre, Kingston-upon-Thames; 57 Heath Street, Hampstead, NW3. Rather than having a

regular sale, Jerry's are promoting particular "Smart Buys" in January and February, reducing the prices of classic American kitchen and home wares. For example, there's 24 per cent off the American Diner "Gibraltar" tumbler (now £2.25), 34 per cent off their white rag rug, now £5.95; 27 per cent off their popcorn popper, now £19.95. Customers are invited to telephone 0171-581 0909 for a catalogue.

Miscellaneous
Starts 28 December, ends 13 January. At Crossways, Church, Farnham, Surrey (01428 714014). Sells decorative bathroom and kitchen objects. Some massive discounts, including complete marble bathroom suites reduced from £2,500 to £800.

Natural Flooring Direct
Starts 3 January. Sell flooring by mail order from Natural Flooring Direct, PO Box 8104, London SE16 4ZA (0800 454 721). Ten per cent off all stock, plus free fitting, free underlay and free sight survey. For example, coir natural panama reduced from £16.99 per square metre to £15.30, wool bouclé reduced from £20.99 per square metre to £18.99.

Nice Irma's
Starts 8 January at 46 Goodge Street, London W1 (0171-580 6921). Discounts of up to 50 per cent off a large range of iron and brass candlesticks and off selected fabrics. Price of plaid fabric halved to £6.30.

The Pier
Runs from 28 December until 21 January at stores around the country. Customer inquiries 0171-351 7100. Christmas merchandise is reduced to clear. Other merchandise at half price or less includes china ranges, marble kitchen ware, selected terracotta and a range of vases.

Purves & Purves
Starts 27 December at 80-81 and 83 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (0171-580 8223). Up to 40 per cent off ex-display and discontinued lines. Special orders will be reduced by 10 per cent on items over £500.

SCP

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From 6 to 27 January. At 135-139 Curtain Road, London EC2 (0171-739 1869). Designer furniture and accessories by Jasper Morrison, Matthew Hilton, Le Corbusier, Mies Van Der Rohe. Discounts of up to 50 per cent on shop floor models, and 15 per cent off any other furniture ordered during the sale.

Victoria & Albert Museum Shop
Starts 8 January at Cromwell Road, London SW7 (0171-938 8468). Up to 75 per cent off selected lines of replica glasses, plates, cups and saucers, platters, goblet and contemporary-style vases. Also 50 per cent off selected items of V&A jewellery and fashion accessories including earrings, brooches, cufflinks, silk waistcoats and ties.

MISCELLANEOUS

Buyers & Sellers
120-122 Ladbroke Grove, London W10 (0171-239 1947). Dial-a-bargain sale of domestic appliances runs from 27 December until 31 January. The idea is that you name the item - brand, model number and ring up for a sale price quotation. Special offers include Neff table dishwasher £189, De Dietrich stainless steel gas hob £117.

The Charleston Shop and Gallery
Sale 6 and 7 January, 12-5pm. Charleston Gallery/shop, Charleston, near Fife, Lewes, East Sussex (01323-811626). Everything will be reduced by 25-50 per cent. Some seconds of Quentin Bell's ceramics will be available to purchase.

David Mellor
Sale starts 6 January for two weeks at 4 Sloane Square, London SW1 (0171-730 4259). Discounts range from 10 per cent on all standard kitchen merchandise, including kitchen knives and tools, pottery and porcelain, glassware and coffee-makers. Twenty per cent off most of the David Mellor range of cutlery. For real bargain hunters, up to 90 per cent discount on odds and ends of slightly damaged or soiled merchandise. It's worth noting that David Mellor only has a sale once a year.

Mulberry Hall
Runs 4 January until 3 February at Stonegate, York (01904-620736). Splash out on famous names such as Wedgwood, Spode and Royal Worcester at discounts of 30 per cent while seconds in Royal Doulton, Minton and Royal Crown Derby are half the normal price. A dinner service for 10 in Spode's "Chancellor Cobalt" design is reduced from £2,395 to £1,595. A tea set for 10 in the same design is reduced from £1,235 to £825.

The Pukka Palace
Sale starts 28 December, ends 28 January. Twenty per cent off their Anglo-Indian furniture and accessories, such as leather safari suitcases and solar lamps. Pukka Palace, 174 Tower Bridge Road, London SE1 (0171-234 0000).

Snow & Rock
Starts 27 December through to the end of January at 188 Kensington High Street, London W8 (0171-937 0872) and branches nationwide. Savings of 10 per cent off all accessories and ski boots with selected items substantially reduced.

Tridias
From 1 January to 14 February. At 124 Walcot Street, Bath (01225 469455). Ring for other branches. Up to 50 per cent off good-quality toys. For example, puppet theatre reduced from £17.99 to £12.99, wooden Timba game from £9.95 to £6.99, crystal radio from £6.95 to £5.95. Postage & packing for mail-order sale items will be reduced to £1.95.

BLAZERSALE

STARTS TOMORROW

major reductions throughout the store
including business shirts @ £25, £27.50 or 3 @ £69.95

HOBBS

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For nearest branch telephone: 0171 586 5550

Hopes of a bumper 1995 for bids were realised spectacularly, with a provisional £70bn worth of deals done, writes **Magnus Grimond**

Record year for takeovers and mergers

City hopes of a bumper 1995 for big deals were realised with a vengeance, as British companies chalked up £70bn worth of takeovers and mergers by late December.

A provisional 1995 estimate from the magazine *Acquisitions Monthly* puts the last peak of £47.2bn in 1989 into the shade and pitches last year's £24.8bn into outer darkness. Around £950m of the money that changed hands is estimated to have stuck to the sticky fingers of merchant banks, lawyers, stockbrokers and public relations people, making it easily the best year ever for City advisers.

The omens were propitious from the start, as companies surviving the recession rushed to spend the liquidity built up during the recovery – even if the stock market gave little encouragement, ending 1994 below where it had started. Just 23 days into the new year, the record-breaking £9.1bn bid for Wellcome by its rival Glaxo was a giveaway that 1995 was going to be a vintage year.

Unlike the freewheeling 1980s, however, the motivation behind the big deals has changed in the more puritan

1990s. With conglomerates apparently consigned to the dustbin of history, it was not difficult to see that asset stripping and accounting magic would no longer be the driver of the urge to merge – at least not in public.

Instead, industrial logic was to be the new mantra of the politically correct City, with pharmaceuticals, financial services and the privatised water and electricity utilities picked out as ripe for rationalisation, reform and rejuvenation.

And thus it was. With the £1.8bn takeover of Fisons by Rhone-Poulenc Rorer, the creation of Glaxo Wellcome put two pharmaceuticals deals into the top five of the year. Glaxo spoke of the need to cut bloated research and development costs, streamline management and pack a bigger punch. Following the takeover, Glaxo became the world's biggest drug company, but its market share only edged ahead to a still pretty unimpressive 3 per cent or so.

Fisons put up a doughty de-

fence under Stuart Wallis, the former Bowater (now Rescan) executive parachuted in to sort out the sick man of the drugs sector. Slaying one of the most sacred cows of the industry, Mr Wallis sold off most of Fisons' research and development operations as part of a strategy which all but doubled the price of the shares, levering them up from a low of 105p even before the bid. He eventually squeezed a higher offer out of RPR, tak-

ing the bid to 265p and leaving Fisons' shareholders plenty to be pleased about after years of underperformance.

It also won Mr Wallis a new reputation as a corporate turn-around artist, but even he was not able to reverse the currently received wisdom that medium-sized pharmaceutical groups such as Fisons will be squeezed in the new world divided between giants like Glaxo Wellcome and minnows, like the new biotech companies which

caught the imagination of the stock market so spectacularly during 1995.

The other sector where the industrial logic argument held sway was financial services. Having seen 120,000 jobs go in the last six years, it is hard to see where further rationalisation can come. But Lloyds Bank's agreed £6.1bn marriage with TSB – the second-biggest deal of the year – was seen as a further move in the tidying up of

the banking industry.

There was also a little local flurry of enthusiasm for foreigners for some of the City's proudest names. Having failed to consummate a tie with Morgan Stanley of the US five months earlier, SG Warburg succumbed ignominiously to Swiss Bank Corporation for £860m. The level to which the once-mighty Warburg had sunk was graphically illustrated in June, when Kleinwort Benson, relegated to the second division of the mer-

chant banking sector, gave up its independence for £977m.

One sector drew more than its fair share of the takeover fire last year, and industrial logic was hard to discern in the thinking of most of the bidders. The electricity industry and its healthy cash flows became ripe for the picking as the Government's golden shares in the 12 regional electricity companies fell away from March. Trafalgar House, which blazed the trail with its £1.2bn tilt at Northern Electric, was eventually forced to pull out of the running – the subsequent revelation of its own pious financial position giving a strong clue as to its reasoning. The irony of its situation was underlined as the result in July of the electricity price review prompted by the Trafalgar bid was taken as the green light for a motley collection of other raiders to enter the fray.

They poured across the border from the north as Scottish Power launched a £1bn assault on Manweb, the distributor for Merseyside and North Wales, and from across the seas, with Southern Company – America's biggest power utility – also offering £1bn, this time for South Western Electricity.

As the turkey shoot continued, a water company, North West Water, was drawn into the fun and games, eventually seeing off another group of US predators to secure Norweb for £1.8bn in the sixth biggest deal of the year.

With all this action, the old guard of conglomerates and would-be contenders were clearly itching to get involved. Hanson, already unloved, failed to win back many admirers by hitching itself to Eastern Electricity in a £2.4bn deal. Its share price remained becalmed on a three-year low.

Meanwhile, Gerry Robinson clearly showed himself keen to emulate Lord Hanson's achievement as he watched his share price go backwards after his Granada Group dropped its £3.3bn bombshell on Forte, the Savoy to Happy Easter group. When the dust settled, that turned out to be potentially the third biggest deal of the year, although the outcome remains far from certain.



Under the microscope: Pharmaceuticals was one of the sectors picked out as ripe for rationalisation

With conglomerates apparently assigned to the dustbin of history, industrial logic was to be the new mantra

John Eisenhower recalls a traumatic year for the City

The fuse is lit for Big Bang's second stage

Nick Leeson lit the fuse of Big Bang Two. The explosion did not just sink one of the City's grandest banking vestiges, but unleashed shock waves that are still reverberating across the financial services sector.

They became caught up in other convulsions, in intense competitive pressures, in a surge for size through mergers and takeovers to maximise client and cost-saving potential, in a push to serve a broad range of markets and products.

It is a very different City that exists 1995 from the one that entered; certainly it is more foreign, and the transformation is far from over. The shake up in investment banking still has to run its course. But it is to building societies, insurers, fund managers and retail banks that the focus of attention is more likely to turn. Big Bang Two looks like having several stages, and some have yet to begin in earnest.

Fate and fraud did for Barings. But however much the collapse was explained away as a freak happening, it crystallised the concerns in investment banking circles about whether the medium-sized houses which dominated the City had the resources to punch with the US and Continental giants. What followed were the rapid-fire takeovers of some of the City's household names by big balance-sheet foreign banks.

One of the sweeter ironies is that 1995's most spectacular failure ended the year as one of its successes. Dutch-based ING outwitted several of its better-known rivals to snatch Barings for £1 and, with sensitivity, has refloated the wreck.

But where ING's absorption of Barings can already be judged a success, it is far too soon make such claims for Swiss Bank Corporation's takeover of Warburg. The securities side, which is what SBC was really after, is thriving. But

corporate finance, once the envy of City, is struggling, with trouble in tatters amidst clashing cultures. One of the UK's finest franchisees will look much poorer by the middle of 1996, as product takes precedence over relationships.

Warburg had tried, with insufficient resources, to take on the Wall Street behemoths, and failed. A sharp appreciation of this same dilemma prompted Kleinwort Benson to agree to being taken over by Dresdner Bank, Germany's second largest, and Smith New Court to vanish into Merrill Lynch of the US.

This leaves a heavy question mark over the remaining City independents, like Schroders.

What followed were the rapid-fire takeovers of some of the City's household names

Flemings and Rothschilds. They have received plenty of overtures of interest, not least from NatWest Group, which is keen to build up its corporate finance and fund management clout, but which has missed spectacularly on all the main deals so far.

But the sizeable family stakes give these remaining merchant banks a strong defence, and they may well thrive as focused and nimble international players among the giants, as long as they keep their hubris – and costs – under control.

Unlike Big Bang One, this has not been a top-down regulator's revolution, but rather one driven by the pressure of the street. It has been the year of the all-singing, all dancing financial services conglomerate. This has not just been in investment banking. In the retail

sector, too, businesses have been merging across traditional boundaries, looking for size, clients and distribution, and the ability to offer products spanning banking, investment, pensions and insurance.

Lloyds Bank's takeover first of Cheltenham & Gloucester building society and then TSB bank was the sharpest pointer to the shape of things to come. Abbey National's hostile grapple for National & Provincial left all building societies, for so long cosseted in a world of tradition and mutualism, feeling vulnerable. Alliance & Leicester and Woolwich are expected in the New Year to abandon mutualism, converting to bank status in order to prepare for growth, while Prudential, to move into banking, Norwich Union, in the insurance sector, appears headed in a similar direction.

The composites, led by Sun Alliance and Commercial Union, are also eyeing each other, but too many big egos are blocking the merger pathway. Perhaps, if the Lloyd's of London cloud of uncertainty hanging over the insurance sector is lifted by a settlement in the spring, that one of the giant Continental insurers, like Allianz or Axa, will finally make the long-expected move, setting the acquisition train rolling.

Even the Japanese are back, darkening the doors of City merchant banks with questions about picking up fund management businesses. The sale of Gartmore, almost certainly to a foreign house, is to be completed in the New Year and will not be the last.

The year 1995 in the City has been marked by foreign invasion. But at least the surge of inward investment confirmed London's position as the world's most international financial centre, and the undisputed financial capital of Europe. For all the traumas, as the year closed, the City appeared to be thriving as rarely before.

Forte restaurant sale could thwart bid

MATTHEW HORSMAN and JOHN SHEPHERD

Granada is set to come under intense pressure this week, as its bid target, Forte, pushes ahead with plans to sell off its restaurant business to Whitbread, the food and drink giant, for nearly £1bn.

The sale, which insiders at Forte yesterday confirmed could come within two weeks, has emerged as the key plank in Forte's controversial defence against Granada's unwanted £3.3bn bid.

A deal with Whitbread could complicate the Forte bid situation dramatically. Any sale would have to be put to shareholders, and that might not be possible before the crucial day 39 of the bid period, after which final financial details cannot be published. It is also possible that Granada may ask the Takeover Panel to intervene.

Granada had no comment last night. A spokesman suggested that "this might not be the best time to be selling assets, where your arm is twisted behind your back". He said, however, that the company would wait for further details on the proposed sale.

Granada had planned to keep the restaurant business, largely made up of the Happy Eater and Little Chef chains. Forte operates 26 roadside service sites, branded as Welcome Break, and a network of 55 sites in France, under the Cote France brand.

If a deal with Whitbread is reached, Granada will have to hope Forte shareholders will hold their authorisation, and choose instead to accept the television and leisure company's hostile bid. But for that to happen, Granada is likely to have to up its offer, perhaps by as much as £600m.

Forte's radical defence, which would leave it with its hotel operations, had been given a mixed reaction in the City. But analysts concede the demerger plan is clever, as it could remove from the equation the very assets – namely the restaurants – that attracted Granada's attention in the first place.

A sale of the restaurant operations would substantially reduce Forte's debts. The company is also working on disposing of its daisy of White Hart hotels, and has just confirmed the sale of its US Travelodge hotels for £114m.

Granada's offer has been justified by its chief executive, Gerry Robinson, on the grounds that the Forte assets had been badly managed, and that Granada could release shareholder value. He and his executives have promised to improve Forte's profits by £100m a year.

The Business Quiz

1. Who was Mary Ellen Synon referring to in March when she said: "I kept everything Roo touched – the envelopes on which he wrote my name, the ribbons that were tied around the books he gave me, even the leaders he wrote in The Economist... I found him divine in everything."

2. Which departing chairman was forced to remove his personal belongings from his office at four o'clock on a February morning?

3. Which regulator wiped £4.25bn off the value of shares in his sector and prompted one overseas institution to describe the City as "a financial banana republic"?



4. Who lost his employer \$1.1bn? Was it: (a) Toshhide Iguchi (b) Nick Leeson (c) Kenneth Clarke

5. Who lost his employer \$1.33bn? Was it: (a) Toshhide Iguchi (b) Nick Leeson (c) Kenneth Clarke

6. Which actor does Nick Leeson want to play the role of Nick Leeson in the forthcoming Hollywood movie of the Barings disaster?

7. Who said of whom: "We would welcome them back – they have my phone number"?



8. Which Bank of England official failed to get the rise he wanted? Was it: (a) Eddie George (b) Rupert Pennant-Rea

9. Which "fat cat" proved the last straw for the Government, sending Tim Eggar "incandescent" with rage when he insisted on collecting an extra £200,000 through a "special dividend"?

10. Which chief executive gave up bathing?

What was so great about 1995?

Test your knowledge of the past year's triumphs and disasters. Compiled by **Simon Pincombe**



Images of 1995: Nick Leeson (above) with (small pictures clockwise from top left) Kenneth Clark, Asprey's, the Ritz and Eddie George

11. What happened when David Jones, chief executive of Sharelink, accused the London Stock Exchange of exploiting its monopoly powers on a BBC radio programme? The LSE had refused to supply real-time share prices over the internet.

12. How much in damages did the High Court award against the accountancy firm Binder Hamlyn earlier this month? And how much are each of the

accountants personally liable for?

13. Who collapsed at the Maxwell trial after delivering the immortal line: "I'm sorry M'Lud this really isn't working..."?

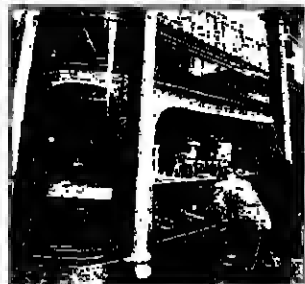
14. Which famous US lawyer took tea with the Maxwell trial judge?

15. Who bought the Ritz?

16. Which firm of public relations ad-

visers was publicly rebuked for breaching the Takeover Code and fired by its client?

17. 1995 was a year of currency turbulence. Which of the following exchange rates has fallen the most in the past 12 months, and which the least? (a) sterling's effective index against other major currencies? (b) the Mexican peso against the dollar? (c) the Italian lira against the German mark? (d) the US dollar against the Yen



18. Who bought the Queen's jewellers, Asprey's?

19. The industrial nations started to tackle their budget deficits in 1995 – leading to a government shutdown in the US and demonstrations on the streets of Paris. Which OECD country has the biggest government deficit as a proportion of GDP?

20. The Wellcome trustees were not popular when they pledged their 39.5 per cent of the company to Glaxo during the £9.4bn takeover bid in February. Some were personally threatened. What form did the threat take?

21. Whose shares jumped from just under £5 in the summer to over £26 earlier this month? And why?

22. Wall Street hit numerous successive highs this year. But what was the most spectacular performing share?

23. What is the average punt on the National Lottery?



24. Who produced a report which led to a snap change in the taxation of share options, a humiliating government climbdown, and drove its author to wear an apron bearing the words "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen" when he appeared before the Commons employment select committee?

The answers

1. Rupert Pennant-Rea. 2. Kenneth Clarke. 3. Sir Richard Greenbury, the Marks & Spencer chairman, who led the company's £4.25bn write-down. 4. (b) Nick Leeson. 5. (b) Nick Leeson. 6. John Wood. 7. Nick Leeson to Sir Richard Greenbury. 8. (a) Eddie George. 9. Sir Richard Greenbury. 10. Sir Richard Greenbury. 11. The LSE refused to supply real-time share prices over the internet. 12. £200,000. 13. Sir Richard Greenbury. 14. Sir Richard Greenbury. 15. Sir Richard Greenbury. 16. Sir Richard Greenbury. 17. (a) sterling's effective index against other major currencies. 18. Sir Richard Greenbury. 19. Sir Richard Greenbury. 20. Sir Richard Greenbury. 21. Sir Richard Greenbury. 22. Sir Richard Greenbury. 23. Sir Richard Greenbury. 24. Sir Richard Greenbury.

sport

From seagulls and trawlers to 57 old farts and Neanderthal Man. **Rob McLean** trawls through the sports quotes of 1995

The year of the sardine

'Lomu is a freak'



THE OVAL REVOLUTION

Everyone seems to do very well out of rugby except the players. It has become more than a fun game. You do not have a World Cup for fun. If the game is run properly as a professional game, you do not need 57 old farts running rugby. *Will Carling on the Rugby Football Union, remarks which resulted in his temporary sacking as captain of England.* Personally I took no objection to being called an old fart, but as England captain he should know how to behave. *Denis Easby, RFU president, who sacked Carling.* I'm disgusted. I can't quite take it in. What Will said was simply what an awful lot of people think about the guys running the game. *Dick Best, former England coach.* The decision has been made. I stand by it - and there is no chance whatsoever that it will be reversed. *Easby.* It is feasible that he could be given back his captaincy. *Easby, on reinstating Carling three days later.*

He's on a big ego trip with no consideration for English rugby at all. *Brian Hanlon, coaching director of Bristol, on Sir John Hall, chairman of Newcastle United FC, who took over the city's rugby union club.* Playing against the French is like facing 15 Eric Cantonas. *Brian Moore, former England hooker.* I used to hate watching rugby league on television. It was violent, slow and just dreadful. We all thought it was a joke sport. *Martin Offiah, Great Britain's winger who used to play rugby union.* I'm 49. I've had a brain haemorrhage and a triple bypass and I could still go out and play a reasonable game of rugby union...but I wouldn't last 30 seconds in rugby league. *Graham Lowe, former Wigan coach.* Someone from rugby league should have bought him before the World Cup started. *Jack Rowell, England manager, on Jonah Lomu, the New Zealand player who ended England's World Cup hopes.* He's a freak - and the sooner he goes away the better. *Carling on Lomu.*

'When seagulls follow a trawler it is because they think sardines will be thrown into the sea' - **Eric Cantona in March, after winning his appeal at Croydon Magistrates Court against a six-week prison sentence following his conviction for assault**

Photographs: PA

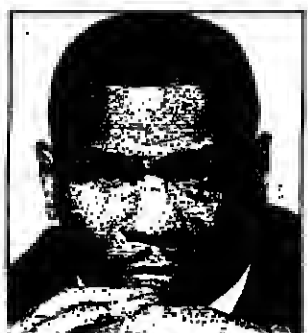
He wants to keep people guessing because he thinks he is better than everyone else. Basically in sea terms, he is saying he is bigger than the average sardine. *Raj Persaud, psychologist.* It's a red herring, if you will excuse the expression. *Zebib Bokso, a leading angling writer.* It was one of the most amazing things I have ever seen on a football ground. It does not matter how you are provoked by the crowd, whatever language is used to you, you have to be above it. It is unbelievable and inexcusable. *Gary Lineker, former England captain, on Cantona's kang-fu kick.* It nearly always happens when he has decided he has been wronged and the referee is doing nothing about it. Then he resolves to exact his own justice, which is madness of course. *Alex Ferguson, Cantona's manager at Manchester United.* Eric's problems can only be solved by Eric. *Bobby Charlton.* The Cantona situation cost us everything. *Ferguson reflects on the double that got away.* I would have cut off his testicles. *Brian Clough.* He has lit up my football watching and that's what it is all about. I would pay to go and watch Cantona. *George Best.*

I would not change anything, nothing at all. I am not always pleased with myself, but that's the way I am. *Cantona.* It's my nature to react the way I do. It's an instinct and to hell with people who are not happy with it. *Cantona.* Genius is about digging yourself out of this big hole which you find yourself in, or in which others have put you. That's genius. Genius is not about complaining. *Cantona.* I am very worried. There is always a potential John Lennon assassin-type out there somewhere, and you fear the worst. *Gordon Taylor, Professional Footballers' Association chief executive, after a Millwall hooligan ran on the pitch and threatened the Sheffield Wednesday goalkeeper.* It was simply a typing error. *Carlisle United spokesman, after the club's Information Line gave the advice "When giving oral sex, don't blow. It can be dangerous."* Perhaps I shouldn't have got involved, but we have a few wild ones, and when I saw this guy running at the English supporters with something in his hand, I grabbed him, and told him to piss off. *Jack Charlton, then Republic of Ireland manager, on the crowd riot at the match against England in Dublin.* I went in and got hold of him, but when there's spittle running down the side of your face it's hard not to want to do something about it. *Graham Taylor, then Wolves manager, who was spat at by a fan in a match against Sheffield United.* I threw the water because the linesman seemed deaf. *Diego Maradona, then coach of Racing Club, sent off after throwing a water bag at an official.* The man is obviously a few sandwiches short of a picnic and it caused our club a lot of anxiety. *Reg Burd, Millwall chairman.*

on Ian Wright, after the Arsenal striker accused some Millwall fans of being racist. What happened on Sunday was an ordinary story of hate among teenage brats. *Jean-Claude Brasse, president of French side Red Star, on the murder of a fan in Paris.* I want the chance to prove I'm not Neanderthal Man, just a man who wants a second chance. *John Sinton, the sacked*



Don King: 'I'm God's child. He put me here to help others'



Mike Tyson to King: 'Be quiet while I'm talking'

on the crowd riot at the match against England in Dublin. I went in and got hold of him, but when there's spittle running down the side of your face it's hard not to want to do something about it. *Graham Taylor, then Wolves manager, who was spat at by a fan in a match against Sheffield United.* I threw the water because the linesman seemed deaf. *Diego Maradona, then coach of Racing Club, sent off after throwing a water bag at an official.* The man is obviously a few sandwiches short of a picnic and it caused our club a lot of anxiety. *Reg Burd, Millwall chairman.*

You are the most corrupt official in the game. *Tarango in Rebeuh prior to being disqualified.* I feel like a victim. That is probably the word I would use...used and abused. I go to the chiropractor three times a week. He says I am so stressed out he can't even turn my neck. *Tarango.* I can't believe he did that at Wimbledon. He may be in for a big vacation. *John McEnroe on the incident.* I was afraid for my life. He was wild. He was absolutely out of control. I was so frightened of this raging maniac. *Eleonor Weinstein, McEnroe's neighbour in a New York apartment block, who had a row with the former Wimbledon champion about his monopolising the building's lift.* What are you going to do about it, put a knife in my back? *Andre Agassi after being confronted by a fan at the Hamburg Open.* You have to go to war and in war you have to be prepared to die. That's what boxing is. *Gerard McClellan, before his WBC super middleweight fight with Nigel Benn, which resulted in brain surgery for McClellan.* I felt sick. A cold shiver ran through me. I just wanted to get out of the stadium. *Michael*

Watson, who was paralysed after a fight with Chris Eubank three years ago, on the same fight. I can't take any more. I just can't. When I get this season over, that's it for me. I'm finished. You are not just fighting the American athletes, you have got to fight inside your own camp as well. *Linford Christie.* There are assassins in the world. People who hide behind buses when you jump out into the snow. Then there are character killers. *Mike Tyson.* Tyson has no real choice but to box for me. I'm the man who made him \$16m in the last two fights when he wasn't even champion. How else is he going to pay for more Lamorghinis and Cadillacs? By going to college? *Don King.* If I wasn't bound by a code of conduct, I could name so many players in the present Pakistan team who have been bribed to lose matches. *Aamir Sohail, Pakistan Test batsman.* This is the first time a referee has brought me to tears. He is incompetent and negligent. I asked him to move from the line of sight and he wouldn't. *Alex Higgins, after losing 10-5 in the qualifying stages for snooker's Embassy World Championship.*

more support from women viewers. *Sharron Davies, TV gladiator and former Olympic swimmer.* I am and always will be a staunch supporter of doping controls in sport. *Diane Modahl, after her successful appeal against a positive doping test.* I said to the owners, the Johnsons, they'd be mad to run this horse in the National. He's been a nightmare to train. If any horse in the yard has problems, nine times out of 10 it's Alfie, as Royal Athlete is known. *Jenny Pitman, after Royal Athlete's victory in the Grand National.* I'm not fat. I know that I'm not fat. If I look at any Joe Bloggs walking down the street, I know I'm not fat compared to them. But in terms of the skin and bone athlete, the distance runner, I'm not in that mould. *Liz McColgan, the British athlete, is not fat - it's official.* Literally, she died in the last 50 metres. *Sally Gunnell gets carried away with Australian Cathy Freeman's poor finish in the 400m final at the World Championships in Gothenburg.*

WOMEN'S TALK

The nightmare will never fade. My scream is what stayed with me a long time. It was eating me alive. I'd go out on the court. I could be playing great tennis and it would all start coming back. I'd say 'I can't do this'. *Monica Seles, a few days before her return to tennis after 27 months in an exhibition match against Martina Navratilova.* I still can't believe I'm actually doing this and I'm actually here. It's like a dream. It's so exciting. It's what I love to do, it's all I've ever asked for. *Seles on her return.* Getting old sucks. You set up the point just right, you have the open-court volley, you would make with your eyes closed 10 years ago, and I'm concentrating like hell and I still miss it. *Navratilova in retirement.* Women shouldn't keep blaming the men for the state of women's sport. Men aren't trying to hold us back, the fact is sportswomen need more

'I'm an alcoholic. My life was going nowhere

BUNGS, DRUGS AND SLEAZE

Yes, I was stupid - yes, I was greedy. If it was offered me again I would definitely say 'no, no, no'. *George Graham, former Arsenal manager, on the John Jensen transfer bung scandal.* Graham accepted the money then repaid it. It's just a question of determining intent, what he took it for. *Steve Coppell, of the Premier League's commission*

investigating corruption in football. There may be a fair bit of pain to go through, yes, and I don't know why I feel like the man who shot Bambi. *Rick Parry, chief executive of the Premier League, puts Graham on the spot.* I've never met the agent. The only time I spoke to him on the telephone he was chattering on about a problem with a work permit. *Brian Clough denies any involvement with Rune Hauge, the*

Danish agent involved in the Jensen affair. The second he's brave enough, his enough and gets a bloody shove and doesn't walk like a spiv, then I'll sue him if he repeats it. *Clough, talking about Alan Sugar's High Court allegations that he took a "bung" during the Teddy Sheringham transfer deal.* If an employee of a football club commits a financial irregularity then they should be sacked and that club should be punished, as we were in 1990 when we were relegated. But it is clear there is one rule for the bigger, richer clubs and a different one for the smaller ones. *Ray Hardman, Swindon Town chairman.* He refused to let the players go to bed if he was losing money during a late-night gambling session. One time he owed me around £400 or so. He desperately wanted to play one-card turnovers for £250 a shot. I began stacking winning hands to

reduce the debt to sensible levels. *Malcolm Macdonald, former England striker, remembers Parry's gambling problems.* I've started to grow up now. I've got the choice of going back to the booze and gambling or to go the other way. It's up to me now. I am an alcoholic. My life was going nowhere. *Paul Mereson, the Arsenal footballer, faces up to the future after six weeks in a rehabilitation clinic for treatment for alcohol and gambling addiction.*

I'll guarantee you now that if the Rugby League went and tested 10 players from each team playing at the moment, they would find it very hard to get full sides out in the field. Blind eyes have been turned everywhere. *Janis Blean, Doncaster full-back who was tested positive for anabolic steroids and banned for two years.* I've heard that there are two well known footballers - nothing to do with West Ham or Everton - who have not been caught and are heavily into 'so-

cial drugs'. *Tony Cottee, West Ham striker.* It must have been a misunderstanding, or if not a genuine misunderstanding, a trap. *Diego Maradona reaffirms his innocence of deliberately taking drugs at the 1994 World Cup.* The mistake I made was not getting the hell out of the hotel bar about two hours earlier than I did and going straight to bed. *Tinnie Jones, in trouble after biting the nose of a journalist.* Monster, monster, shocked.

Eric Hall, Dennis Wise's agent, reacting to the news of the Chelsea footballer's three-month jail sentence for assaulting a taxi driver. Leave my hero alone. *Eric Hall to photographers as Wise left court after being sentenced.* I have spoken to many taxi drivers and the majority are saying they will not pick him up. *Bob Oddy, general secretary of the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association.* I could have been a bank robber if it hadn't been for football. *Wise.*

'Some people think Botham is just a talented thug. I want him working for England.' *Denis Silk, the Test and County Cricket Board chairman, backing the former England Test all-rounder.*

'I think he made a bit of a prat of himself'

ATTACK OF THE VERBALS

He is a product rather than a person. *Damon Hill on Michael Schumacher.* It was dangerous and unsporting. I think he did it deliberately and if he does it again I know what to do. *Schumacher attacks Hill for dangerous driving at the French Grand Prix.* It's total hypocrisy. There is one rule for him and another for the rest of us. *Hill on Schumacher after the Pacific Grand Prix.* It is difficult because he is too moody and I have problems with moody people. But it would be a great gesture for the German fans to be fair to Hill and applaud him. *Schumacher on Hill before the German Grand Prix.* I think he made a bit of a prat of himself. *Frank Williams, Williams-Renault team boss, on Hill's collision with Schumacher at the British Grand Prix.* Two top drivers in the same team, rarely pays off. They get into fights on and off the track. They hide information from each other and this hinders the

progress of a team. *Schumacher, then Benetton No 1, on the prospect of teaming up with Nigel Mansell.* He is wet behind the ears. He is not a businessman in the accepted sense of the word. I once thought we were the dream ticket. I saw him as my successor but not anymore. *Karl Bruns, Chelsea chairman, on his rival for control of the club, director Matthew Harding.* I don't give a damn about being chairman. All I know is at the moment we have the wrong chairman. *Harding.* I can forgive one lapse, but not the kind of behaviour he has demonstrated over the two years he has been here. Put it this way - Matthew Harding has no redeeming features. *Bates.* I've been watching Chelsea from outside the director's box for 31 of the last 33 years, so it's hardly going to kill me. I have 12 season tickets in the front row of the upper tier. *Harding, banned from the directors' box by chairman Ken Bates.* After what has gone on, what has been said, I cannot see how we can continue to work together. He has been nice to my

face but said unpleasant things about me behind my back. *Bates.* I was a fan for 20 years before Ken Bates, and I'll still be a fan 20 years after he has gone. *Harding.* I can't tell you what's going on in the man's mind, it's a very funny mind. *Bates.* I know this is a personal question, but are you aware that your shorts are slightly transparent? *Reporter to Andre Agassi.* No, but apparently you are. *Agassi.* Manchester United not only have the best players, they have the best referees as well. *Sam Hammam, Wimbledon chairman, after his club were beaten by United.* I almost wanted Howard Wilkinson's team relegated because of their fans. I don't think Leeds deserve to be in the Premier League. You can feel the hatred, their fans were awful. *Alex Ferguson, Manchester United manager.* If you want to lose your life that's up to you. *Chris Eubank warns Steve Collins before their world title fight.* If The Poms Bat First. Tell The



'He sent me off in his usual Hitler fashion. He's a dreadful referee who is typical of the standard we have faced all season.' *Joe Kinneir, the Wimbledon manager, sent off by Robbie Hart against Manchester United.*

'Taxi To Wait. Bennerat the third Test in Sydney. It was a complete accident but I'm responsible for my actions. *Tim Henman, after being disqualified for hitting a ball girl with a ball.* If I'd done that at Wimbledon I would have been jailed. *John McEnroe on the Henman incident.* He's supposed to be one of our best, and he should be there for players to talk to, not to be a little Hitler. *Ian Wright, the Arsenal striker, on referee David Elleray.*

THE GOOD GUYS

I watched the ball go over in disbelief. *Rob Andrew on the kick that beat Australia in the World Cup quarter-final.* I had to come up with something. I owed the lads one after putting South Africa into bat and seeing that move not work out. *Michael Atherton, after his innings of nearly 11 hours which saved the second Test against South Africa.* I'll remember it for a long, long time, and I'm going to get pissed. Tomorrow we're visiting a vineyard, so I'll probably get pissed again. *Atherton, after England's first Test victory in Australia for eight years.* If any of my opponents had done what I did today I would have thought they were on drugs. *Jonathan Edwards after breaking the world triple jump record twice at the World Championships.* I don't know if I was all that good. I never saw myself play, so how do I know? *Sir Stanley Matthews, who celebrated his 80th birthday this year.*

I won't be a pawn in the hands of business or government. I'm vaccinated and immune to corruption. *Pele, the newly sworn-in Minister of Sports, who remembered that in 1972 the military government wanted to use his image in a football tournament to gain popular support for the regime.* People will say I have a screw loose, that I've lost it, but perhaps it's just that I am in the 0.1 per cent of footballers who doesn't give a toss about unlimited money. *Matthew Le Tissier, explains why he stays at Southampton.* It doesn't look like I try very hard to get the ball back. *Le Tissier speculates on why he is being left out of the England squad.* I simply wasn't prepared to commit myself for seven days a week. In any walk of life people want more leisure time. *Kenny Dalglish, who stepped down as Blackburn Rovers manager.* I'm as patriotic as the next man but I fear they could be embarrassed. *Sir Bobby Charlton worries about England's chances in Euro 96.* I can't even imagine now being

a footballer. It's ridiculous. It's as far removed as me being a concert pianist. *Jimmy Greaves.* It brings to an end the most remarkable era in horse racing. *Ginger McCain, horse trainer, on the death of Red Rum, three times winner of the Grand National who died this year.* If anyone could be Michael Jordan for a day, they'd see it's not all it's cracked up to be. I can never be a normal person. *Michael Jordan, basketball player and probably the most famous sporting figure in the United States.* I had 15,000 people supporting me today. That's what won me the match. *Britain's Greg Rusedski after his four-set victory over the No 16 seed Guy Forget, of France.* Those who knock darts think it's easy. Try throwing for double top when your mortgage depends on it. *Rod Harrington, at the WDC Championship.* I learned about the risks early on. My dad was always going to funerals. *Damon Hill, Formula One driver.* The longest three minutes I've ever known. *Frank Bruno on the final round of his World Boxing*



Council heavyweight title win over Oliver McCull. My head looks like ET gone wrong. *Bruno after the fight.* I had four doughnuts on eight and a chocolate chip muffin on 10. I've got more additions now than when I was drinking. *John Daly, the Open champion who is suffering migraines since he gave up drinking more than two years ago.* I'm tired of the struggle to maintain my riding weight. I will miss riding but you simply can't go on forever. *Lester Piggott rides into the sunset.*

sport

Dublin can dash grey expectation

A dashing grey favourite in the King George VI Chase - after the Desert Orchid years, it seems as much a part of Christmas as dyspepsia and hangovers, and although One Man may still have a great deal to prove, as he gallops to post for his first King George this afternoon, the parallels with his famous predecessor go further than colour and style. At seven, he is the same age as Desert Orchid when he first won the race in 1980, and with such youth and talent on his side, One Man could yet become a fixture to much.

First, of course, he needs to win today, and inspection of the field lined up against him is conclusive proof that celebrities need luck as well as talent. Desert Orchid's good fortune was to be the outstanding chaser of a generally disappointing era, and it must be doubtful whether even one of his four Boxing Day victories was achieved against such a strong hand of rivals. Barton Bank, Merry Gale, Dublin Flyer and last year's (albeit fortunate) winner, Algan, are serious dangers, while success for Val D'Alene, Coulton or Brief Gale would hardly qualify as a major surprise.

Which begs the question, just how good is One Man? The answer is a little more vague than you might expect of a 2-1 favourite in one of the year's most prestigious races. His most recent success, in the Tommy Whittle Chase at Haydock, was undeniably impressive, but remarkably this was his first outing outside handicap company since his novice days, and even then he was getting a weight from the runner-up, Monsieur Le Cure.

Greg Wood tips a fearless jumper to topple the King George favourite

In his previous race, at Ayr, One Man beat Jodami, the 1993 Gold Cup winner, by seven lengths, but received 16lb, making Jodami, who may well be a declining force, the better horse at the weights. His form in the second half of last season was hardly encouraging, either, with falls in two big races (including the Racing Post Chase over today's course and distance) following his Hennessy victory, achieved under bottom weight of 10 stone.

This is not to deny that One Man is an improved performer this season, or that his chance this afternoon is significant. On the balance of his form, however, he does not deserve to be a 2-1 chance. The value, therefore, must lie elsewhere, and more specifically with one of his three main rivals at the top of the market.

Barton Bank is hard to support with confidence after his last-fence disaster 12 months ago, which leaves Merry Gale and Dublin Flyer. Either should provide a good run for your money, but since he is at least twice the price of the other flying coteeders, DUBLIN FLYER (nap 2/20), a 10-1 chance with William Hill, demands support.

His courageous performance while winning the Mackeson Gold Cup under 11st 8lb was perhaps the most impressive of the season so far, and even then he was getting a weight from the runner-up, Monsieur Le Cure.

might also coax mistakes from several opponents and his odds seriously underestimate his chance.

Novices provide the major points of interest on the undercard, with the opening hurdle in particular pitting some useful performers against high-class recruits from the Flat. River North, a Group One winner on the level, is already a 2-1 chance for the Champion Hurdle in March, but for once it is difficult to mock the bookmakers' caution. Royal Gait and Alderbrook have both graduated from the Flat to be the best over timber in recent seasons, and the former made his hurdling debut in today's race.

He did not win, however - he finished second to Travado - and River North could be forgiven for needing time to adjust to a new discipline. The splendidly-named Agilis (12.45) could make it a difficult introduction.

An exceptional field for the Feltham Novices' Chase, in which Master Strump, Mr Mulligan and Master Orchestra, whose brother is the King George absentee and Gold Cup hope Book Of Music, but Bill Of Tullow (1.15) looks best of all. Cheryl's Lad (1.45) will be no sort of price but is hard to oppose in the handicap hurdle, while Simple Arithmetic (next best 2.30) stands out in the Wayward Lad Novices' Chase.

The feature event in the oorth is the Rowland Meyrick Handicap Chase at Wetherby, with Jodami and Young Husher among the entrants. At the weights, Le Stragone (2.20) has every chance, as does his stablemate Ask Tom (2.50) in the novice chase.



Dublin Flyer's courageous jumping may coax mistakes from his King George rivals

Photograph: Ed Byrne

Kempton inspect

Today's meetings at Ayr and Sedgfield have been called off due to frost and snow and Kempton's card has been put under threat by a worsening weather forecast.

"We have had bit of rain but the going is still soft - the only thing that has changed is the forecast," Michael Webster, the clerk of the course, said.

"In view of forecast temperatures of minus six degrees Celsius, there will be a precautionary inspection at 6.30am.

The inspection is timed so that the result can go out on the first racing bulletin on Radio 5 Live at 6.55.

Hereford's meeting is also subject to a precautionary inspection at 7.30am because the forecast is for frost.

Edinburgh's card tomorrow is also in doubt. "The course has frost and snow and an inspection will be held at 9am on Boxing Day," the course's manager, Mark Kershaw, said.

KEMPTON

12.45 River North
1.15 So Far Bold
2.45 Cheryl's Lad

2.20 Val D'Alene
2.50 Harwell Lad
3.20 SESAME SEED (nap)

PRECAUTIONARY INSPECTION: 6.30am

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Rowell left scarred by mauling in the endless ruck

It is anything but a season of goodwill for Jack Rowell and, even more so, for the manager of the Bath Rugby team, who is patently not succeeding now, either in the battle to change the way his players play or in the other battle, the public-relations one - which post-Samoa really has been calamitous. The well-appointed press box at the Recreation Ground neatly symbolised the dichotomy between Rowell and his accusers, with the manager one side of the glass in the wireless zone and the writers looking at him from the other side.

And neither the twain did meet, nor will they if our understanding of Rowell's extreme perturbation is true. All queries about England's training and selection for the French game in Paris on 20 January are referred by Rowell to Colin Herdridge, the Rugby Football Union's media man, who then of course has

gave a tackle-bag a memorable going-over in Wanganui in 1992. He did not succeed then and he is patently not succeeding now, either in the battle to change the way his players play or in the other battle, the public-relations one - which post-Samoa really has been calamitous. The well-appointed press box at the Recreation Ground neatly symbolised the dichotomy between Rowell and his accusers, with the manager one side of the glass in the wireless zone and the writers looking at him from the other side.

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to ask Jack. Which is plain daft. Anyone who heard Rowell's interview with Ian Payne on Radio Five Live will have realised that there is a man who is struggling to restrain his incoherence. Payne was doubtless glad he was far away at the other end of the line, and there came a point when the producer was anxiously wondering whether Rowell would carry on as agreed to be the second voice during the match commentary.

For the record, Rowell never blamed the media - not in as many words, anyway - for the way England approached the Samoa match; the actual culprit was Will Carling, the captain, who told a television interviewer in the tunnel immediately after the final whistle that "the impression from the media was that we would put 50 points on them". It would be interesting to know what part of which medium was re-



STEVE BALE

COMMENTARY

ponsible for this misapprehension though, even if it were so, the responses of both Rowell and Carling indicate that their team are astoundingly suggestible. But it seems to me the erroneous expectation came rather from an ignorant Twickenham crowd - those outside and not inside the press box - and that the poverty of England's performance owed as much to the disruption

caused by their own interminable contract negotiations with the RFU as to the way they tried to play.

Of more pressing concern for Rowell at the Rec - after he had told his radio listeners that the nation and its media needed to get behind his team, that is - was the performance of the leaders of the First Division against the leaders of the Second. That Bath eked out a 12-3 victory through three Jonathan Callard penalties to one by Paul Grayson on a morass of a pitch under leaden skies would tell its own baleful tale if in fact the match had not been a magnificent spectacle fit to cheer even not-so-jolly Jack's heart.

Indeed here were two teams committed to playing the very rugby of which Rowell has spoken so often, and tempering their free-running aspirations with occasional appropriate deference to the demands of the

conditions and the occasion. Now, if only England could manage something similar against France...

Moreover, this was a lesson for the law-makers as well as instructive for the England manager. Even before the new imperative of professionalism there was too much tampering in the interests of "entertainment" and if ever a game showed that "entertainment" does not necessarily consist of an endless series of tries and manufactured movement this was it.

All the talk - of which there is plenty - about removing basic elements of the rugby union game should thus be treated with contempt, because the alternative would be an ersatz concoction of next to no merit. It is time, instead, to declare ourselves unashamedly and wholeheartedly in favour of rucks and mauls, line-outs and scrums.

Northampton's presence in the

fifth-round draw next Tuesday will be sadly missed because their intrepid display at Bath, significantly superior to anything achieved by this season's league visitors there, proved them already to be of upper First Division quality. From the actual First Division, Orrell and Sale will also be absent, the North-west's cup challenge having been ended by London in the shape of Harlequins and Wasps respectively.

Winnington Park of the Fifth Division North are the lowest qualifiers for the last 16. Leeds of the Fourth Division saw off Waterloo of the Second and Coventry of the Third did likewise to Blackheath of the Second. Among those joining them are Newcastle, who can now look forward to having England's most-capped stand-off eligible to play in the fifth round. Better not mention Roh Andrew to big Jack, though.

Life goes on at rock bottom

Survival is the goal at Torquay, holding up the League, and in the home of Fawley Towers a sense of humour is important as well, says Clive White

Rooted at the bottom of the Football League - six points adrift, Torquay United is to the town's sporting endeavour what Fawley Towers is to its hotel industry. Apparently, the local council regard the club as a bit of comedy, too, which probably ill-befits its smart English Riviera image.

While Torquay Athletic Rugby Club sits resplendent beside the bay next to the Grand Hotel, poor old Plainmoor is tucked away like Cinderella in a corner of the town, largely unloved. For one notable exception, and practically forgotten. Not that you could blame Mike Bateson for that. If the team were half as good footballers as the chairman is a publicist they would be top of the league.

Bateson, a self-made millionaire, has tried just about every ruse imaginable to bring the club more success/bigger crowds, from signing Justin Fashanu to painting the visitors' dressing room a deep pink (or was that Fashanu's dressing room?). All to no avail.

Likewise the visit he recently made to the players' lockers to the optician when results didn't bear scrutiny any more. "It wasn't intended as a dig at the players, although the later one was when I suggested they ought to have brain scans. Didn't they object?" They didn't understand it," he said.

Judging by United's fortunes this season they couldn't have done much worse if Basil was running the team. An 8-1 home defeat - their highest in the league for 62 years - precipitated the departure of Don O'Riordan and the arrival of Eddie May from Cardiff. Since when results have improved - marginally. Now they lose 8-4, as at Walsall after extra time in an FA Cup replay, having hit both posts with one shot in the 91st minute when the score was 3-3. At least it made a change from being eliminated by non-League sides.

"Steady Eddie", who follows in a line of some distinguished managers at Plainmoor including Frank O'Reilly and Bruce Rioch, has an extensive knowledge of the Third Division as both a player and manager and appears to have stemmed the rot.

It wasn't always like this. In Bateson's first year as chairman five seasons ago they gained promotion in the play-offs by beating Blackpool, his home town club. "I thought, 'this is a piece of cake'", he said. "In four or five seasons at most we'll be promoted to the First Division. Of course, we weren't. In fact we were relegated the very next season."

"At the start I thought a couple of hundred thousand injected into it could help it a lot. Silly me. There comes a time, however, at most football clubs

when the head starts to take over from the heart. Reality takes a hold when you're physically writing out cheques for fifty and a hundred thousand pounds. Of course, by then you've gone a certain way down the road and you have to ask yourself do you run away from it and let the whole thing crumble around your ears or do you put a little bit more in and try to turn it into a business, which is what I did."

His "injections" almost turned into a complete blood transfusion, reaching almost £1.5m before he called a halt. He expects the club to make a profit for the third consecutive year thanks to the sale of Gregory Goodyear to Queen's Park Rangers for £350,000. The Bosman business, of course, threatens to put a stop to such nice little earners, in fact the very existence of this club and many more like it. Torquay make a heavier investment than most in youth development with a dedicated officer and a purpose-built lodge. Bateson reckons they need to net about £150,000 a year in transfer fees to balance the cash flow.

Relegation would cost the club about £300-350,000 a year. He said they would try to run with a tight but full professional squad for the first season in the hope of bouncing straight back. Admission prices, only £6 and £3 at it is, would have to be further reduced in what he describes as "this cold bed of football". He tried offering under 11-year-olds a £10 season ticket and set aside 500 places. They closed the offer after three months, having sold 150.

"Football clubs are a very strange business," he said, "unlike any other. Most businesses know where they'll be in six or 12 months barring a recession or whatever. Who knows how our finances would have changed had that shot in injury time at Walsall gone in or if a recent inquiry from a Premier League club for one of our players comes to fruition. Actually, if somebody like Newcastle would care to give me a ring I'll take £1m off them for any of my players. In fact I'll take £1m off them for all of our players."

Someone once described him as looking like a lean version of the comedian Mike Reid, but Bateson's got a much better sense of humour. He's needed it. "In the back of my mind I still can't help thinking there's something rather ridiculous about men dressed in shorts chasing a ball around a field - a little bit Pythonesque," he said.

Don't mention the Dead Parrot sketch, though. Bateson, who is president of the local RSPCA, has about 40 of them in an aviary at his home - "they talk a lot of sense". His grandfather was the curator at Blackpool Zoo so he was brought up with a healthy appreciation of animals. It probably explains why he vetoed the commercial department's ferret racing day.

He remains optimistic that Torquay's uneventful League history will see out its 69th year. As the late Peter Cook once said of his home town club: "They've had more close calls than a silent movie star tied to a railway track." Appropriately, founder members of the Fourth Division, even their elec-



Beach bums: Ashley Bayes, Torquay's long-suffering goalkeeper, practises with his coach, Len Bond, before the Christmas rush

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Kilmarnock set out to end the curse of the Old Firm

SCOTTISH FOOTBALL

Brown believes Kilmarnock can beat the Old Firm today against Rangers at Ibrox. Premier Division leaders Celtic Kilmarnock only two points clear of rivals Celtic, travel to Raith.

Brown insists Alex Totten's side can succeed where they failed recently against Celtic to claim their first win in 14 attempts against either of the Glasgow giants. "Beating either Rangers or Celtic can give you a massive lift and we must believe we can go to Ibrox and win," Brown said. "I was in our team which won 2-1 there a couple of seasons ago,

but in recent games against Rangers we have tended to lose concentration at vital times and you cannot afford that."

Kilmarnock were 2-0 up at Celtic earlier this month. Brown's header putting them firmly in the driving seat after Ally Mitchell's opening goal, but they conceded two goals in 60 seconds two minutes before half-time and ended up losing 4-2 to the title-chasing Bhoys.

"None of us could believe what happened that day and we all sat in the dressing room afterwards," Brown said. "We feel if we had held the 2-0 lead to half-time we would definitely have come away from Parkhead with at least a draw and maybe even a win."

"Since then we have beaten Falkirk and Partick, but were hammered at Aberdeen in between. We need to show some consistency, as the season is entering a vital period for us with a handful of clubs bunched together near the bottom."

Kilmarnock have battled their way to survival in the last two seasons and he believes points won over the Christmas period could prove the difference between survival and relegation. "It is very important at this stage when you play a number of games in a short period. Any points you can pick up now can set you up for the later stages."

Rangers have Paul Gascoigne and Oleg Salenko available after suspension, but Ally McCoist and Stuart McCall are out with calf injuries. Gary Bolan and Alex Cleland are doubtful, but Rangers will welcome back Gascoigne, who has been banned for two matches.

Celtic have no injury worries ahead of their visit to Raith, although Peter Grant and John Hughes complete three-match suspensions.

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TODAY'S NUMBER

2

The number of holes-in-one in successive shots that golfers John Legarra and Tom Gabelman hit when playing together in Dayton.

SPORTING DIGEST

Baseball

The St Louis Cardinals signed high-priced free agents Ron Gant and Andy Benes to long contracts on Saturday, just one day after an agreement was reached to sell the team, keeping it in St Louis.

Basketball

Indiana Pacers (Eastern) beat Detroit Pistons 105-88 on Saturday. Detroit's Donyell Marshall scored 21 points. Detroit's Reggie Miller scored 21 points. Detroit's Grant Hill scored 21 points. Detroit's Ben Wallace scored 21 points. Detroit's Chauncey Billups scored 21 points. Detroit's Tayshaun Prince scored 21 points. Detroit's Richard Hamilton scored 21 points. Detroit's Jermaine O'Neal scored 21 points. Detroit's Mike Miller scored 21 points. Detroit's Reggie Miller scored 21 points. Detroit's Grant Hill scored 21 points. Detroit's Ben Wallace scored 21 points. Detroit's Chauncey Billups scored 21 points. Detroit's Tayshaun Prince scored 21 points. Detroit's Richard Hamilton scored 21 points. Detroit's Jermaine O'Neal scored 21 points. Detroit's Mike Miller scored 21 points. Detroit's Reggie Miller scored 21 points. Detroit's Grant Hill scored 21 points. Detroit's Ben Wallace scored 21 points. Detroit's Chauncey Billups scored 21 points. Detroit's Tayshaun Prince scored 21 points. 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Italo Cerullo and Matt Tench pose the questions from another puzzling year

The Independent Sports Quiz of '95

NUMBERS GAME

- 1 Why were England still in with a chance facing the final ball of the match against Australia A when needing 31 to win?
- 2 What is the next number in the sequence: 4, 4, 0, 4, 4... and why?
- 3 For whom was 49 a suitably Super number?
- 4 For whom were the numbers 200 and 20.25 significant?
- 5 For whom was 4 the last installment of 8,900?
- 6 Who scored a masterful 70, 67, 69, 68 and why was his win tinged with sadness?
- 7 Complete the sequence: 16-13, 16-16, 16-19, 19-19, 19-22, 22-22...
- 8 Which record-breaking match saw the winners score 21 tries and 20 conversions. What was the score and who scored six tries?
- 9 Which colonial enterprise took 85 seconds to sink without trace?
- 10 For whom was 45 feet not far enough?
- 11 In which sport did women hit 250?
- 12 For whom were 17.98, 18.16 and 18.29 very special numbers?
- 13 For whom were 185, 492 and 645 very special numbers?
- 14 Whose debut resulted in 7 for 43 at Lord's?
- 15 For whom was 112 a Silva lining?

CASH INCENTIVES

- 16 For whom was £150,000 an unduly taxing figure?
- 17 Which sports body showed distinct political incorrectness in turning down sponsorship worth £10m, and why?
- 18 For whom was £425,500 not worth it?
- 19 Which teenagers were worth £2.5m and £2m?
- 20 Who paid whom \$100m to dress grunge, not to shave and wear ear-rings?

15 MINUTES OF FAME

How did the following find themselves in the spotlight in 1995?

- 21 Matthew Simmons
- 22 Derek Ringer
- 23 Mark Johnston-Allen
- 24 Caroline Hall
- 25 Murphy Jensen

COURT CIRCULAR

Match the following to the locality of their court appearances

- 26 Dennis Wise
- 27 Eric Cantona
- 28 Peter Graf
- 29 Duncan Ferguson
- 30 Ray Parlour

PLACES

- 31 At which unlikely venue did De Freitas, as twelfth man, help his side to victory this summer?
- 32 How did Brighton make it into Europe?
- 33 In which sport did a Canadian beat a Monegasque at Eastbourne?
- 34 Stockholm was the venue as Norway beat Germany to lift the World Cup. In which sport?
- 35 In which race did London beat Manchester, Sheffield and Bradford?

IF THE FACE FITS

Put names to the faces which have been blanked out during famous sporting events of 1995



ALL THE ANSWERS

BEYOND BELIEF

- 41 What linked Alec Stewart's leg, Darren Gough's foot and Shau Udal's thumb?
- 42 Why did Serie A players wear shirts before their matches start on 12 February?
- 43 Which three countries did England play on the same weekend in summer?
- 44 How did Milan's Marco Simeone dazzle yet still fail to impress in the European Cup final against Ajax?
- 45 Who pinched and slapped Wimbledon umpire Bruno Rebeuh?
- 46 Which "super team" was unveiled in Paris and included Vialli, Walsh, Cantona, Pal and captained by Maradona?
- 47 Name the left-arm wrist spinner whose "frog in a blender" action has caused England problems.
- 48 Who deserted the Prancing Horse for the knitted sweater?
- 49 Why won't Nigel Mansell be setting new motorsport records with his new team?
- 50 Why didn't Peter Schmeichel need to use his hands against Rotor Volgograd?

COMING AND GOING

- 51 Who returned to Rio?
- 52 For whom did the wheels finally stop turning after 43 years?
- 53 The last British man to succeed at a British sporting institution died this year. Who?
- 54 Which two Grand National winners went to the great stud farm in the sky?
- 55 Which bowler took the final Test wickets of Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting in the same innings?

UP FOR THE CUP

- 56 Which jockey and trainer double act completed the first Champion Hurdle and Gold Cup success for 45 years, and with which horses?
- 57 The Ryder Cup saw two holes-in-one. Who by?
- 58 Why was Paul Tait's goal at Wembley historic?
- 59 Which colt shot to victory in the Ascot Gold Cup?
- 60 In what sport were Indians beaten by Braves?

DON'T QUOTE ME

- 61 "It did not matter whether Eric Cantona or Mickey Mouse kicked him; he should not have reacted." Which manager and of which club, said this of his player, Charlie Hartfield?
- 62 "Do it for your coach, Pete!" Which Pete? Who is his coach? Why did it need doing?
- 63 "We came here with a short-term ambition which failed. I don't think we have made any progress at all." Who made this bleak assessment?
- 64 Who said "I'm just going home, to bed, and after which?"
- 65 Who did Mickey Duff call "a little bit of a cunt"?
- 66 "They probably think I'm on drugs or something." Who said this?
- 67 Who called Francois Pienaar "average" and why did he come regret it?
- 68 "Come on, we'll take you all." Who said this when?
- 69 "The Gazza free-kick in the Cup semi-final was bad enough. This was worse." Who was reflecting on what?
- 70 "All the match I was unlucky. Most of the time, he hit a lull shot." Which ungracious losers talking in early July?

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- 52 Lions who pulled out of Formula One racing after a prolonged struggle.
- 53 Red Perry.
- 54 Red Bull who was the winner in 1973, 1974 and 1977 and Rubens the crowd to beat him corner from two set.
- 55 Craig McDermott.
- 56 Norman Williamson and Kim Bailey who won with Aldbrook and Master.
- 57 Costantino Rocca and Howard Clark.
- 58 The goal - for Birmingham City, international against South Africa at Twickenham, England lost 14-24.
- 59 Double Trigger.
- 60 Baseball. The Atlanta Braves beat the Cleveland Indians in the final.
- 61 David Seaman on Man's long-distance back on a Crystal Palace fan.
- 62 Paul Ince (Birmingham) to the Seagulls.
- 63 Mike Cantello England's rugby international against South Africa at Twickenham.
- 64 Jonathan Edwards.
- 65 Chris Eubank.
- 66 Neville Southall, just after Everton FA Cup final.
- 67 Michael Atherton of the ashes from a Brian Lara.
- 68 Peter Dinklage was suffering from a brain tumour.
- 69 Paul Ince (Birmingham) to the Seagulls.
- 70 Goran Ivanisevic, after losing the Wimbledon final to Pete Sampras.
- 19 Jonathan Ross, whose long-range shot was the only goal in the match.
- 20 Nicky Butt (Aston Villa) who scored the winning goal for Liverpool in the FA Cup final.
- 21 The 200m relay team of John Dymally, Mark Kennedy, Pauline Hogg and Mark Kennedy (Aston Villa) who scored the winning goal for Liverpool in the FA Cup final.
- 22 He was Colin McCree's co-driver as he won the world rallying championship in the 1995.
- 23 Best Stephen Hendry in the first round of the Bournemouth International.
- 24 Open.
- 25 West Ham.
- 26 The 1995 FA Cup final.
- 27 The 1995 FA Cup final.
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SPORT

TAMING THE CRAZY GANG

Glenn Moore on Joe Kinnear 20

QUOTES OF THE YEAR
QUIZ OF THE YEAR

Liverpool prepare to fulfil their potential

Football
GUY HODGSON

One of the more astonishing calls to Radio Five Live's Six-O-Six recently suggested that Roy Evans ought to be dismissed as Liverpool manager. He is out of his depth was the crux of the argument, which somehow forgot the small matter of the Coca-Cola Cup last season.

It was a facile suggestion then and made even more so now that Liverpool have rediscovered the verve that deserted them in November. Those who witnessed their recent destruction of Manchester United could testify that this is a team with delicious potential, and that Evans is about as un-

der water as Neil Ruddock in the three-foot end.

Roy Evans has rebuilt Liverpool into a youthful, strong-looking team. "Bruce Rioch, the Arsenal manager, said in the aftermath of their 3-1 defeat at Anfield on Saturday, "When you play an excellent side like them you get a measure of your own ability. We've got a lot of work to do if we want to challenge."

The inference was that Liverpool can win the Premiership, a challenge that will assume more weight if they defeat sixth-placed Aston Villa today.

Their greatest source of optimism comes from the strike partnership that once had the synchronicity of Morecambe and Costello, but has since gelled to an extent - Nottingham Forest supporters please note -

that Stan Collymore provided the passes for all three of Robbie Fowler's goals on Saturday. "People say that Robbie and Stan can't play together," Evans said. "I think against Arsenal they proved it is not a problem." He is realistic enough, however, not to underestimate Newcastle's 11-point advantage over his side. "We cannot afford any more slip-ups."

Kevin Keegan, a former Anfield player, said: "I believe Liverpool will still feature in the title race. I watched them beat Manchester United and some of their football was the best I've seen this season."

Villa's manager, Brian Little, has a "broken heart" to mend, not to mention a little restoration of morale after a 1-0 defeat at Queen's Park Rangers.

The boy with the crushed core is 18-year-old Lee Hendrie, who spoils his debut by being sent off for a second bookable offence eight minutes into injury time. His chance to redeem himself will depend on Ian Taylor's ability to recover from ankle and shin injuries.

Top scorer Dwight Yorke is set to return after suffering a broken nose, while Mark Draper, replaced by Hendrie after 34 minutes at QPR, should recover from a bruised thigh.

The task for QPR today is a trip to Arsenal, who are searching for their first win in six League matches. Tony Adams is certain to return for the Gunners after suspension. "We need to make one or two changes in personnel," Rioch said. Brace yourselves for more

stories linking the club to Paul Ince and Alan Stubbs.

Adams will be up against Mark Hateley, who completed the match against Villa blood-stained and with a broken nose. Not that the old warhorse was diminished, saying: "There's no way we'll go down."

Tottenham, who squandered a two-goal lead in their disappointing home draw against Bolton Wanderers, will have full-back Dean Austin available after a three-match ban for their trip to Southampton.

Matthew Le Tissier (calf), plus flu victims Francis Benali and Barry Venison all missed the Saints' 2-2 draw at Sheffield Wednesday and manager Dave Merrington will wait for fitness reports before finalising his team. Middlesbrough, lying fifth,

will make a late decision on Nicky Barry for their visit to Everton. The former Spurs forward missed Saturday's 4-2 win over West Ham with an Achilles tendon injury. Paul Rideout is expected to spearhead the Everton attack after scoring on his return as a substitute in the 2-1 defeat at Coventry. Duncan Ferguson is still ruled out by flu.

West Ham suffered no injuries at the Riverside Stadium but must tighten their defence against Coventry at Upton Park. Harry Redknapp, the West Ham manager, admitted: "Without Alvin Martin we have problems. It is like the blind leading the blind. I need to strengthen my defence as quickly as possible."

Wimbledon, without a win in 14 Premiership games, will be almost back to full strength at

Chelsea, who are awaiting a fitness test on Dennis Wise. The Dons goalkeeper, Paul Heald, suffered a knee injury in the 1-1 draw against Blackburn and Hans Segers could start a game for the first time since 7 March. Sheffield Wednesday's Yugoslav imports Darko Kovacevic and Dejan Stefanovic could make their full debuts at Nottingham Forest, who may restore Scott Gemmill after leaving him out of the 3-1 defeat at Newcastle. That would allow Steve Stone to return to his favoured position on the right of midfield.

Garry Filmer will be back from suspension for Manchester City's trip to Blackburn, while the decision over which misfiring striker to drop could be made easier by Uwe Rösler's flu.

In tomorrow's
24-page sports
section

Reports and analysis from the Boxing Day sporting programme

Ball watching

Reports from all the day's major football matches



Cole v Ferdinand
Guy Hodgson looks ahead to the Premiership match of the season so far, Newcastle's visit to Manchester United. Plus: our top 20 Premiership footballers of the year

First of the fourth



Derek Pringle reports from Port Elizabeth on the first day's play in the fourth Test between Mike Atherton's England and South Africa

Royal procession

Ken Jones and Richard Edmondson report from the King George VI Chase at Kempton

Derby day

Dave Hadfield reports from Central Park on the rugby league derby match between Wigan and St Helens

Union men

Coverage of the Boxing Day programme in rugby union

Tales of the unexpected

Strange but true: some of the most unlikely stories of 1995, including the world record that never was, the bowler who was shown the red card, and the occasion when 30 wickets fell in a single day's play at a county championship cricket match.

Published by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 4DL, and printed at Mirror Colour Press, St Albans Road, Watford

Tuesday 26 December 1995 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

Adams asked to turn the outcome

Cricket

DEREK PRINGLE
reports from Port Elizabeth

England players who tour regularly are long used to combining their family Christmases with the more serious matter of winning Test matches. Yet this has not always proved compatible, as the previous two yuletide Tests in Melbourne have proved.

This year in a break from the traditions of celebrating Christmas in fancy dress, England have instead spent most of the festive season here singing songs and watching videos in an attempt to exorcise the ghosts of Christmas past.

England realise there are only 10 days of cricket left to win this series, which is still level pegging after three drawn matches. Any slip-ups in the fourth Test here could let the opposition in and both sides know that with so little slack to play with, few can be afforded. But if the karoke party - in particular Raynon Illingworth's version of "The Twist" - on Christmas Eve eased tensions and provided the appropriate hilarity, much of yesterday was spent practising, watching videotape of the left-arm wrist-spinners Paul Adams and worrying about the height of the sight-screens.

Since his nine wickets against England in Kimberley, the 18-year-old Adams has shown he is no flash in the pan wunderkind. Today, barring last-minute injury, he will become South Africa's youngest Test player.

Apart from the raw inexperience of having only played five first-class games - although Ramadhin and Valentine had only played three between them when they were first picked for the West Indies - it is a moment he is clearly relishing. "I am just looking forward to bowling my first ball," he said. He does not follow in the modern sledging idiom, either - "I just laugh at them."

His is a debut which will resonate around his country as an example of just what can be achieved by those so long at the margins of this sports-crazed land. But it is a debut that carries great pressure too, poised as it is to be made at the critical stage of the series, on a notoriously slow, flat and well-grassed pitch which looks perfect for hating in the early stages.

England however believe that playing Adams will be easier to play second time around, most of them having played against him at Kimberley. But the youngster's inclusion has brought problems closer to home. Dave Richardson has never kept to him before and his



Hat-tricks: Mike Watkinson (left) and Robin Smith try to mix fun and games on Christmas Day

Photograph: Laurence Griffiths/Empics

captain, Hansie Cronje, had a long net batting against him to work out the best field settings.

Richardson, playing his 27th Test has never taken a stumping and he said he desperately wants one for Christmas. He has not had long to prepare, unlike Brian Taylor, who toured South Africa with England in 1956.

In those days the team travelled by boat and Taylor, who had never kept to England's left-arm spinner Johnny Wardle (then bowling chinamen) had brought a gross of tennis balls with him in order to get some practice in on deck. Legend has it that a further gross were

picked up in Gibraltar, the first lot having disappeared overboard as Taylor failed to read the wiles of Wardle.

But if England are now more confident of reading Adams, their complaint that the sight-screens are too low verges on the nit-picking and suggests a side not entirely at peace with itself. South African sources report that no one has complained before about the Press box window above the sight-screens, and anyway they are coated with a special film to prevent glare.

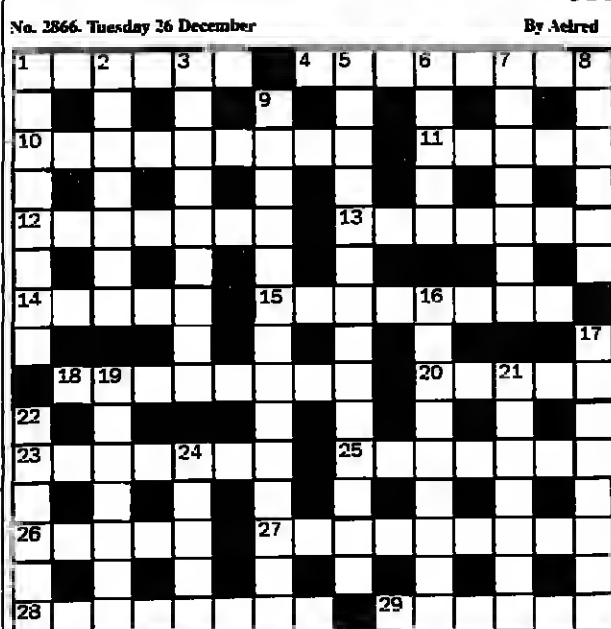
Yet Atherton and Illingworth have been adamant and a token white strip about 18 inches high has been painted to the lower edge of the windows. Interestingly, nothing has been said about the Castle Lager adverts in bright cricket-ball red situated at ground level right behind the bowler's arm.

England, who, providing there are no last-minute misgivings over the pitch this morning, will play the same side as in the last Test, with the exception of Jason Gallian at No 3 for the injured John Crawley. Gallian has been pulled in to help give the innings the solid starts it has so far lacked and will try to end the first-wicket-down

hoodoo once and for all. Judging by the pitch, the bowlers will have much work to do should South Africa decide to bat with due care and attention. Once again England have plumped for swing, but as the former South African captain Kepler Wessels has already warned, it only swings at St. George's Park when the wind is from the east, a direction it was not blowing from yesterday.

Unless it lightens and swings around, Richard Illingworth could find himself with an aching pair of spinning fingers and a hairline that has receded an inch a day.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



- ACROSS
- Light-hearted teasing before entering Britain (6)
 - One's wise to restrict speed in modern times (5,3)
 - Occupied by Avon professor of transport? (4,5)
 - Province worth some mention at a lecture (5)
 - Disgusting mollusc eats aluminium (7)
 - Could they be merry distress calls? (7)
 - King at a place no longer working (5)
 - Certainly holds communications firm to be obliged (8)
 - Roves about to do some gardening perhaps wearing this? (8)
 - One taken in by leading actor finds a way up? (3)
 - It's played as one gets 200 in game (7)
 - Amateur takes in study, not saving much (7)
 - English nun upset by current boredom (5)
 - Beans have grown, getting second and third prize? (7,2)
 - Hot, certainly, with high temperature in ailment (3,5)
 - Oblique as Latin in translation? I quit (6)
 - Graduates carrying husk out for Russian granny (8)
 - Bid for fillet steak impossible? (2,5)
 - Oddly scale a hill, but not with this? (9)
 - Scum of Egyptian spiv? (7,7)
 - Sweet suggestion of Cyprus? I.V.R.? (5)
 - Trigger acute changes keeping in position (7)
 - Join line forming on street (6)
 - An appropriate offering from Kent University? (8,6)
 - They're profoundly meaningful in written music (4,5)
 - Two drugs and what he is who takes them? (8)
 - Is able, in holiday year, to find an opening (7)
 - One seaman's stupid complaint (7)
 - Articulated cheeps could be nearest a bird gets to this? (6)
 - It could produce oil, extra virgin initially? (5)

Business as usual for Wigan as an era ends

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

Whatever ideas clubs might come up with to try to tag their Christmas paydays on to a summer season, today's Boxing Day fixtures are the last in the league and, in all probability, the last that can ever be said to mean anything.

There will be the bitter-sweet flavour of an era ending, therefore, at grounds like Headingley and Central Park, when a tradition almost as old as the game itself comes to a full stop. For Wigan, though, it is very much business as usual. Even if they were to lose to St Helens today - and anything is possible on Boxing Day, as the last 100 years have demonstrated - they would still need only five points from their last four matches to win the Stones Centenary Championship, and that is assuming that Saints or Leeds win all their remaining games.

Wigan hope to have Shaun Edwards back after missing last Sunday's pre-festive hiccup at Oldham, but Kelvin Skerrett is likely to be missing. Gary Connolly has a suspect groin and Craig Murdoch could be out for the rest of this transitional season with a hamstring injury.

The Wigan coach, Graeme West, believes that the astonishing defeat at Watersheddings has acted as a wake-up call to a side who were not playing well, reminding them that the title is not safe yet - not quite. Saints' injury problems, how-

ever, make Wigan's pale into insignificance. Their coach, Eric Hughes, already knows that he will be without key players of the calibre of Paul Newlove, Anthony Sullivan, Chris Joynt and the suspended Bobbie Goulding. He has a number of other players struggling for fitness as well and it could be a very patched-up St Helens side that takes the field at Central Park.

Dean Bell's dissatisfaction with his Leeds squad has been shown over the last week by his approaches for the Batley scrum-half, Glen Tomlinson, and the Salford three-quarter, Nathan McEvoy.

An £80,000 cash bid has failed to secure Tomlinson, however, and Salford were immune to the charms of an offer which would have seen highly experienced internationals like Alan Tait, Robbie Eyles and Harvey Howard heading for The Willows.

For the present, Bell must make do with what he has, which, to most clubs, would look rather a lot. For the traditional morning kick-off against Castleford, he hopes to have the much-missed Garry Schofield and Tony Kemp back after injury, although both they and Marvin Golden face fitness tests.

Castleford had hoped to have Franco Bouca fit to make his first appearance in their colours, but his progress in recovering from a particularly badly broken leg has not been quite rapid enough. He could be in contention by New Year. In the meantime, another New Zealander, Brendon Tuuta, could return after a sev-

en-week absence. A former Castleford player, St John Ellis, is in line to make his debut for his new club, Halifax, against the Bradford Bulls, who allowed him to move the short distance between the two towns this weekend.

Ellis, aged 31, joined Bradford at the start of this campaign after returning from a season with the South Queensland Crushers, but his opportunities look limited now that the Bulls have acquired another goal-kicking winger, Paul Cook, from Leeds.

Ellis has initially joined Halifax for the remainder of the Centenary season, with a view to a longer-term deal.

In the other top division game today, Warrington could have three first-teamers available after injury, in the shape of Gary Chambers, Kelly Shefford and Mark Forster, for their visit to Oldham.

The home side could have the rare luxury of fielding the same side that stunned Wigan nine days ago, with only their loose forward, Howard Hill - one of the notable players this season - the only doubtful starter.

In the First Division, Salford would tighten their grip on the top spot considerably if they could win at Widnes.

Although there have been repeated assurances that Paris will have their side ready for the start of Super League in March, the absence of any announcements on a coach or any players will keep hope alive for the winner of the division that they could be promoted to fill the void.

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